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Mourners file past the royal coffin in Westminster Hall yesterday after it was carried from the palace

Britain lines up to say farewell to the Queen

ANDREW WOODCOCK
POLITICAL EDITOR

Tens of thousands of Britons queued last night to pay their respects to Britain's longest-serving monarch as Queen Elizabeth II lies in state in Westminster Hall. Mourners began filing past the coffin after it left Buckingham Palace for the last time, borne by a gun carriage down to

Parliament Square. Up to 350,000 more are expected to try to join the line over the next four days, with warnings of 10-mile queues and waits of 35 hours. King Charles III and his siblings the Duke of York, the Princess Royal and the Duke of Wessex walked behind the coffin, followed by the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Sussex and Peter Phillips. For William and Harry, it was an

emotional repeat of the day they walked behind the coffin of their mother Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997. Under bright skies, there were cries of "God Save the King!" as the procession arrived at the Palace of Westminster. On top of the coffin, draped in the royal standard, were the imperial state crown and a bouquet of flowers from Balmoral and Windsor.



Editorials

There is no new republic on the horizon for Britain

In her time, though she was too modest to make a public show of it, Queen Elizabeth II is often said to have taken some pleasure in breaking records. For example, she surpassed the spans of Henry III, the first Elizabeth, David II of Scotland, George III and Victoria, among many others, to become the longest-serving and oldest-reigning monarch in British history. She collected jubilees and wedding anniversaries – silver, ruby, golden, diamond and platinum. She is surely one of the most popular, despite some dangerous crises.

Now, the crowds gathering to attend her lying-in-state also look set to smash all previous records, including for Winston Churchill. Some 400,000 individuals from all over the world are expected to file past the catafalque in Westminster Hall. Many more millions across the planet will watch the funeral procession and service, and the BBC has even set up a “virtual” lying-in-state, complete with a book of remembrance. Such innovations are not only natural in the digital age, but a reminder that the institution of the monarchy has to keep up with the times and adapt to ensure its survival. That was something that Elizabeth II and Prince Philip understood extremely well, as did her father and grandfather.

The House of Windsor has always had to change to remain the same. The global interest in the current ceremonials, many archaic and Ruritanian, is a testament to the mystique she added to the role. To the extent that a constitutional monarchy could be said to be democratic, the affection and support for the Queen, even in the darker moments of her reign, does suggest there is little appetite for radical change.

Leaders of progressive parties have consistently found better things to do than abolish the monarchy. With the support of the palace, usually, they have succeeded in making sure the family and its expenses retain the support of the public. The Queen was shrewd enough to begin to pay taxes and open up the royal residences and art collections to the public. King Charles may well extend those reforms.

The sheer number of visitors to the lying-in-state does raise some practical questions, however. It is, it's been fancifully described, a "patriotic river" winding around ceremonial London and out as far as Southwark Park some miles to the southeast. Yet it is doubtful that a 30-hour wait in a shuffling queue during coolish weather is the optimal way for the public's last respects to be paid, especially for children and the frail. There is a much shorter queue and wait for people with disabilities, but again, it is far from ideal.

There is also a danger that many will travel to London in good time and still find that they are too late to see the lying-in-state. Depending on the speed of the visitors, even those with the official wristbands may miss out when the doors finally close. Facilities for the mourners may become overwhelmed and squalid. Even for those who regard the exercise as a form of pilgrimage, this seems an unnecessarily harsh way to organise matters. A ballot with allocated and timed tickets would have been a better way to ensure fairness and order for the lying-in-state.

It is not a moment, yet, to debate the function of the monarchy in contemporary Britain, and it is too early to form a view of the intentions of the new King. Things will change, necessarily. There will be a new style, and some new substance. The futures

of Prince Andrew and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, along with more peripheral members of the Firm, will come under scrutiny again.

The costs and finances of the institution, fundraising for the Prince of Wales's charities now headed by Prince William, the use to which buildings such as Buckingham Palace are put, and the constitutional duties of the King will also, rightly, be up for review.

Given the recent display of medieval faith in royalty by a significant minority of the population and a general satisfaction shown by the majority, there does not seem great purpose in trying to secure a new republic. But the monarchy will need to evolve, reflect the multicultural society it purports to represent, and ensure it commands the consent of the people as they live through financially difficult times. That consent should not be taken for granted.

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Tears and cheers as a nation gathers to pay its respects



A visibly moved Prince Harry wipes his eyes in Westminster Hall yesterday (Getty)

ANDREW WOODCOCK

POLITICAL EDITOR

Tens of thousands of Britons queued patiently last night to pay their respects to Britain's longest-serving monarch, as Queen Elizabeth II lies in state in the medieval splendour of

Westminster Hall. Mourners who had waited outside all night began filing past the oak coffin after it left Buckingham Palace, borne by a gun carriage of the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery down The Mall and Whitehall to Parliament Square.

As many as 350,000 more are expected to try to join the line snaking toward the palace over the next four days, with warnings of queues stretching 10 miles and waits of 35 hours. King Charles III and his siblings – the Duke of York, the Princess Royal and the Duke of Wessex – walked side by side behind the coffin, followed by the Queen's grandsons, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Sussex and Peter Phillips.

For William and Harry, it was an emotional repeat of the day they walked behind the coffin of their mother Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997. Under bright blue skies, there was loud applause and cries of "God Save the King!" as the procession arrived at the Palace of Westminster, with Big Ben tolling at each minute.

On top of the coffin, draped in the royal standard, were the imperial state crown and a bouquet of flowers including blooms from the Queen's homes in Balmoral and Windsor. Beneath the vaulted timber roof of 900-year-old Westminster Hall, the archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and dean of Westminster, David Hoyle, led a brief service to begin the lying-in-state.



The coffin of Queen Elizabeth rests on the catafalque in Westminster Hall (PA)

A visibly moved Harry wiped tears from his eyes as he stood before the purple catafalque bearing his grandmother's coffin. Wife Meghan gave a deep curtsy before the royal party left the hall.

The Princess of Wales, who joined her husband William for the service, was sporting a diamond and pearl leaf brooch formerly worn by the Queen as well as pearl drop earrings thought to have belonged to Diana. The new King himself betrayed no sign of emotion as he departed the hall for Clarence House by royal Rolls-Royce with Queen Consort Camilla.

Unlike the other royals, Harry and Andrew were dressed in morning suits rather than military uniforms, following a palace ruling that these could be worn only by working royals of military rank. Andrew – who was forced to step back from royal duties by the scandal over his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein – is expected to wear Royal Navy dress when the late monarch's children return to the hall to stand vigil over her body.

The first of 20 six-hour vigils before the Queen's body is taken at 6.30am on Monday to Westminster Abbey for her state funeral was mounted by officers of the Household Division, who took up positions, swords drawn, around the coffin. Members of the Lords and Commons, including prime minister Liz Truss and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, were present to see the coffin brought into the hall by eight pall-bearers from 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, whose company commander was the Queen.



King Charles III salutes as the bearer party carry the coffin of his mother into Westminster Hall (PA)

The guardsmen had returned from Iraq to perform the duty and removed their bearskin hats to lift Her Majesty's coffin onto the catafalque. The company colours were draped across the steps of the raised platform on which the coffin rested.

After a 90-minute break to prepare the hall, the first members of the public were allowed inside to pay their respects, some of them having camped overnight to be at the front of the line. The procession of the Queen's subjects past her coffin is due to continue 24 hours a day. By the time doors opened at 5pm yesterday, the queue stretched around three miles from the southern end of the Palace of Westminster, over Lambeth Bridge and along the South Bank of the Thames to London Bridge.

With hundreds of thousands expected to join the queue over the coming days, provision has been made for it to extend as much as 10 miles, with an airport-style zig-zag system in place in Southwark Park to contain its tail end. New entrants will be temporarily halted from joining the queue if it reaches beyond this length. And those arriving at the hall will be told to ensure that they keep moving, rather than lingering to seize extra moments for their farewell.

Government sources rejected suggestions that they had attempted to keep numbers down by issuing warnings of long waits, insisting they want as many people as possible to be able to take part. The queue will be closed some time before the Queen's departure for the abbey, in the hope of ensuring that no one joining the line is turned away at the door.



Members of the public in the queue on the South Bank (PA)

At any given point there will be more than 1,000 marshals, stewards, volunteers and police on hand to assist queuers and maintain order. More than 500 Portaloos have been positioned along the route, with a system of coloured wristbands to allow individuals to return to their place after leaving the queue for food, drink or comfort breaks.

Company director Amanda Salt, 53, from east London, said that watching the procession was a “completely overwhelming” experience. “I think quite possibly the saddest day I’ve ever experienced,” a visibly tearful Ms Salt told *The Independent*. “She gave stability, dignity, service in a way that we just don’t ever appreciate of people.”

Fraser McIntosh, 33, said it was great to see William and Harry “practically hand in hand” as they processed on foot behind their grandmother’s coffin. “It would be great to see them back side by side and being best buddies again as well as brothers,” he told *The Independent*. “So fingers crossed that’s maybe some small silver lining that comes out of an otherwise sad week.”

US president Joe Biden spoke by phone with the King to offer condolences for his loss. A White House statement said: “The president recalled fondly the Queen’s kindness and hospitality, including when she hosted him and the first lady at Windsor Castle last June. He also conveyed the great admiration of the American people for the Queen, whose dignity and constancy

deepened the enduring friendship and special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom.”

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The Queen made humility look easy – people will wait all night for one final view



Her Majesty's elevation to living deity was no accident. People loved her immense, unflappable dignity and her quiet charm (AP)

TOM PECK

The absolute state of it. Quite literally. The absolute absolute state of it. Lying in Westminster Hall is stateliness in this country's most absolute form. The high stone walls, the oak

beamed ceilings. The bearskins, the beefeaters and bobbies, heads bowed in tight solemn formation around the catafalque, the candles, the orb, the mace and the imperial state crown.

The state and stateliness are one and the same. It was not so long ago that human beings genuinely believed power to be drawn from appearance, from Majesty. The awesome power of the state and the state of a child's bedroom are all on the same spectrum. According to Milton, when King Canute ordered the sea to come no further on the land, he gave force to his command "with all the state that royalty could put into his countenance".

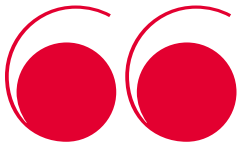
And it was this majesty that they waited all night and all day, queueing over bridges and up embankments for just a moment's glance upon. The grandiose occasion of it all, the pomp and splendour, and the blurred lines between constitutions, institutions and simple flesh and blood have concealed, perhaps knowingly, the human simplicity of it all. The crowds have gathered here for the same reason crowds gather anywhere. Because they're fans.

Besides, what they came to do, she has been doing all her life. For five days the crowds will come to her. For seventy years, she went to them. It is sometimes speculated that the late Queen may have met more people than any human being ever to have lived. In seven full decades of opening buildings and gladhanding crowds you really do rack up the numbers. Politicians try and do the same in election campaigns. Her Majesty was in campaign mode for seventy years and, so arguably unsurprisingly, she ended up rather popular.

This is not to say that all this is without its flaws. When, yesterday afternoon, the coffin swept out of Buckingham Palace, the Queen's late family marching behind it, it was impossible not to notice that two of them were not in military uniform. Prince Andrew and Prince Harry have both stood in the face of gunfire in service of their country, in the Falklands and in Afghanistan.

Their mother and grandmother will be rightly remembered for her dedication to a life of “service” and of “duty”, but those two know more about it than the rest. Both have worn the Queen’s uniform, but neither will wear the King’s. Prince Andrew has been stripped of his honorary royal titles for obvious, well known and entirely justifiable reasons. Prince Harry had his removed when he chose to step down from Royal duties.

It is as vivid a reminder as can hope to wish for that this seemingly kind and gentle family are not where they are entirely through historical accident. Prince Philip used to say that the Royal Family would do what they do, “for as long as people want us to”. And people most certainly do want them to. But it’s not quite as simple as that.



Far too much has already been made of King Charles III losing his temper at a malfunctioning pen not once but twice, but it nevertheless remains true that his mother never really created any real viral moments of this nature in seven full decades



They’re there because they want to be there as well. And they are ruthless in protecting their interests, holding their position, maintaining their reputation. In the eyes of “the firm” as the family refers to itself, Harry and Andrew’s sins are the same – letting the side down – and so they shall be forced to exhibit their deficiencies - one rather more serious than the other – under the most piercing spotlight. It felt like a medieval

humiliation style punishment. Not quite tarred and feathered but morning-suited, civvied. A warning sign.

No, none of this has been left to chance. Her Majesty's elevation to living deity was no accident. People loved her immense, unflappable dignity and her quiet charm, but they were her rare human qualities.

Far too much has already been made of King Charles III losing his temper at a malfunctioning pen not once but twice, but it nevertheless remains true that his mother never really created any real viral moments of this nature in seven full decades and he's knocked out two in four days. And it is not because times have changed either. The occasion of her coronation was, for a lot the country, the excuse to buy a telly. The modern world of camera phones and constant surveillance is the one she has lived in all her life.

When all the Earth's riches have been laid down upon you, looking spoiled is incredibly easy and looking humble is incredibly hard. The late Queen made humility look easy - the hardest thing of all. It's not surprising she has amassed the kind of fan base that will queue all night to wait for a short moment that amounts to almost nothing. They just want to be able to say they were there. Well, now they can, and they most certainly will.

As they walked past the coffin, most of the crowd stood, paused, bowed, then carried on their way. MPs, unsurprisingly, were spared the queueing. Sir Graham Brady, almost part of the constitution now himself, Keeper of the Disgruntled Letters, walked past and bowed his head. The SNP's Joanna Cherry, not the most deferential of souls by nature, held her partner's hand as she let out little sobs.

Few among the passing crowds will realise that, five steps outside the door, they tread on hallowed ground again. Five years ago, almost all personnel on the parliamentary estate were held all afternoon in this grand hall, while PC Palmer's body lay outside, covered by a makeshift sheet.

In the service of his country, he had his life stolen from him. To the same cause, Queen Elizabeth II gave hers rather more willingly, in her own very different way. Seven full decades, chipping away at an enormous mortgage of good fortune which by now, even the most fervent republicans would surely consider to have been finally squared away.

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Welcome to the very long line for Westminster Hall

Crowds were well spirited, but in classic British style queue politics soon followed, **Maryam Zakir-Hussain** reports



Thousands of people have descended on London for the chance to see the coffin before Monday's funeral (AP)

I hate queues – I get tired, my feet hurt, my stomach grumbles. So waiting anywhere between an expected five to 12 hours in a queue that could trickle into the late hours of the night was never a great idea.

Yet, there I was, at 4.30pm yesterday at London Bridge securing my place among the tens of thousands to see the Queen lying in state at Westminster Hall. But by the time I joined the queue, I was already exhausted. I was mistaken in believing the back of the queue (and so presumably the starting place for someone to join) was Southwark Park. So I made my way there at 3pm ready for masses of people to wade through as I fought for a spot.



Maryam Zakir-Hussain at the back of the queue at London Bridge
(Maryam Zakir-Hussain)

But instead there was nothing but security guards, who had picked up extra shifts this week, sitting on the pavement – some

sleeping, some going off to find food – because there were absolutely no queues.

Alas, I had to go to Westminster Bridge, three miles from Southwark Park to join the queue. After jumping back on the Jubilee line at Bermondsey and heading for Westminster, imagine my dismay when I was told that I had to walk an uncertain number of miles to join the start of the queue.



Long queues stretched all the way down Southbank (Maryam Zakir-Hussain)

“How far? How long?” I and many others asked marshalls. Some shrugged their shoulders, others had more of an idea, telling us the back of the queue was somewhere along the Southbank. So on we walked, passing those headed in the opposite direction who had already been provided with the golden (yellow) wristband, an honoured marker of the queuers. I passed

Southbank, I passed Festival Pier, I passed Shakespeare's Globe, Tate Modern with no starting point in sight. After 40 minutes of walking, we came to a halt just outside of London Bridge. Finally, I was in the queue.

We waited at the starting point for 45 minutes at least, before we started to head quite rapidly back towards the Southbank. The speed at which we were going filled me with false hope. "This will fly by!" I thought. I was soon brought back to reality when we stopped outside the OXO tower for just under an hour, then slowly – painfully slowly – walked towards Waterloo Bridge. It had already been two hours and we had barely made ground.

I took solace in some of my queue companions who had ventured to London from Devon and Thailand.

Tunlatorsn Chaivatep, a 23-year-old from Thailand said his curiosity to see how the Thai and British monarchies differ in their ceremonies brought him to the queue yesterday.



Tunlatorsn Chaivatep from Thailand wanted to see how traditions between Thai and British monarchies differ (Maryam Zakir-Hussain)



Hilary Noble (left) and Mavis Sibanda (right) came down to view history in the making (Maryam Zakir-Hussain)

The London-based student said he was surprised to see how long the lines would stretch, having a nasty surprise when he saw he had to walk from Westminster Bridge to London Bridge just to join the queue, and then circle back to Westminster. "Half of me is telling me to give up and go home. But the other half is saying, 'Come on, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity, keep going.'"

"I will give it seven hours – if we're still waiting after midnight, I'm going

home.”

Others were more determined to see the queue through, no matter the wait. Mavis Sibanda said she wanted to have a “last memory of the Queen” on such a historic day. “I’m from Zambia, and so she has always been on my mind. I wanted to be part of what is happening.”

Patricia Wass from Devon said she was willing to wait all night to see the Queen’s coffin. The 64-year-old said: “My mother is an ardent monarchist and she’s been very upset at the Queen’s passing and I wanted to do this for her as well.”

She had been feeling very emotional since the Queen’s death and was therefore prepared to queue for “as long as it takes. If it’s all night, it’s all night”. Meanwhile, Tzu-Ching Hung, 22, arrived in London from Taiwan on Tuesday and wanted to seize the opportunity to witness history while he is in the UK.

“It’s just amazing to see so many people come to pay tribute to the Queen.” Though the crowd was mostly well-spirited and welcoming, there were some classic queue politics that soon turned nasty. Harbinder Sandhar, Chigwell, had watched the procession of the royal family walk with the coffin, having waited at Pall Mall from 12pm.



Patricia Wass from Devon is prepared to queue for as long as it takes, while and Tzu-Ching Hung from Taiwan (Maryam Zakir-Hussain)



Maryam (left) Harbinder Sandhar, from Chigwell, enjoy an ice cream while waiting (Maryam Zakir-Hussain)

She told me she was shocked at how territorial the crowd at the Mall was, with some women telling her she was standing in her place. “I’ve never seen anything like it,” she said.

Ms Sandhar and I walked together and bonded over our experiences. She told me she went to Princess Diana’s funeral, and shared all she knew about King Philip’s history with the Queen Consort. And just like that, with a new friend made and an ice cream shared, waiting hours in a queue turned into much less of a dreadful experience. How very British.

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Police did not understand the law, top officer admits



‘Some of my colleagues weren’t aware what people can and can’t do in terms of holding up pieces of paper,’ says Ken Marsh, chair of the Metropolitan Police Federation (Getty)

ROB MERRICK

DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

Police who arrested protesters for holding up pieces of paper with anti-monarchy slogans did not understand the law, a top officer has admitted.

Ken Marsh, chair of the Metropolitan Police Federation, acknowledged people have a “100 per cent” right to stage such protests – amid anger over heavy-handed crackdowns across the country. There should be “no issues whatsoever” when they take place, he said, adding: “That’s part of our democracy, that’s what we are.”

Asked why, in that case, there have been arrests or threatened arrests in London, Edinburgh and Oxford, Mr Marsh first argued that “the messaging wasn’t correct”. He then admitted: “It was clear that some of my colleagues weren’t aware what people can and can’t do in terms of holding up pieces of paper.”

The embarrassing admission comes after a woman was led away from parliament by police after she unfurled a hand-drawn sign reading “Not My King” on Monday.

In Oxford, a man was arrested and handcuffed by police after he inquired ‘who elected him?’ during a proclamation ceremony for King Charles III. In Edinburgh, a woman who held up an “abolish monarchy” sign was charged with breaching the peace – as was a man who heckled Prince Andrew as he walked behind the Queen’s coffin.

And, in London, a barrister filmed himself being threatened with arrest by an officer who warned him that writing “Not My King” on a piece of paper was unacceptable because it “may offend” people. Paul Powlesland likened the incident to police in Russia dragging away a woman for holding up a blank piece of paper to protest against the invasion of Ukraine.

Sir Keir Starmer refused to comment on the police’s actions, instead urging republicans to respect supporters who had made “a huge effort” to pay respects to the Queen. “Obviously we have to respect the fact that some people disagree. One of the great British traditions is the ability to protest and to disagree, but I think if it can be done in the spirit of respect,” the Labour leader said.

“Respect the fact that hundreds of thousands of people do want to come forward and have that moment, don’t ruin it for them.”

Mr Marsh also described the Met's officers as "probably the best in the world" in terms of ensuring security at the Queen's lying-in-state at Westminster. "There are a lot of things in place where action can be taken to prevent a terrorist attack or any other sort of attack towards members of the royal family," he told BBC Radio 4.

And, on the policing operation, he said: "It's very challenging, it's the biggest thing we've had to put in place for a public area. And bear in mind, this is completely public where everyone will be standing and gathering. So, it's a real challenge for us purely because of the numbers."

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Deepen our connection: an open letter to King Charles



I am hopeful that your reign will bring about yet more understanding and tolerance (AP)

SALMA SHAH

Your Majesty,

May I express my most heartfelt condolences on the passing of Her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, your mother. There are few words that can adequately express the sorrow the whole nation feels for the loss of our North Star or indeed how the

world feels at the departure of a leader that epitomised so much of what is lacking in today's statesmen.

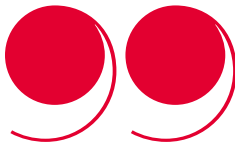
But as has been so earnestly demonstrated over the last few days, the show must go on, duty comes before self and the work will be unrelenting. Sir, you have inherited a troubled nation, it is true to varying degrees in all your realms, and as a constitutional monarchy your ability to affect change can sometimes seem limited. The institution itself is constantly having to prove its worth to every generation, trying to adapt to the needs of your subjects and retell the story of why the stabilising force of the sovereign matters.

There will be pressure on you from all corners. And undoubtedly you will have to ask yourself how does the monarchy retain the consent of the people to continue? Change should be gradual. There is no rush to upend the traditions nor a desperation to preserve it all in aspic. The steady pace of evolution required is a unique and well-honed skill, one I believe, mastered by the Windsors.

The reach of and trust in the monarch is still one of the most powerful and important mechanisms to convene and to revive not just our sense of self, but our communities and our hope for a better future. That is, of course, relevant to community groups and charities up and down the country, but also true of our family of nations.



The principal action is a change in your team by creating a new post for Commonwealth private secretary to Your Majesty



I am of Pakistani and Indian descent. Our connection with the Commonwealth and the ties to the sovereign gives me a sense of belonging to this country. I am British, born and bred, but represent an increasing number of new Britons who are diverse and somewhat conflicted. We cannot erase the traumas of the past but nor can we dwell on them either.

For us, and the next generation we produce, we must see some meaningful change to bind our nations closer together through the power of the monarch. If I may be so bold, I have written a chapter in a paper on **just this topic**. The principal action is a change in your team by creating a new post for Commonwealth private secretary to Your Majesty.

Let us deepen the connection with the Commonwealth, particularly those countries with large ethnic minority communities in the UK. Perhaps even a unit within Buckingham Palace should be dedicated to Commonwealth issues – enhancing, rather than replicating, the work of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, by welcoming the best and the brightest from our family of nations to Britain.

I am hopeful that your reign will bring about yet more understanding and tolerance, and that nations across the world will continue to put their faith in the monarch for constancy and continuity. It is a solid foundation in a world that often feels as

though it's breaking apart. And for that reason alone, I can say of tongue and heart, God save the King.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Majesty's humble and obedient servant.

Salma Shah was a special adviser to Sajid Javid, from 2018 to 2019. She was also a special adviser at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport



**A torrent of racist
abuse has been
unleashed this week**

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King's staff told during church service for Queen their jobs are redundant



Up to 100 employees facing losing employment, it has been reported (PA)

STUTI MISHRA

Household staff who served King Charles as heir to the throne have already been told they could lose their jobs, drawing criticism from a union that called the move “heartless”.

Charles, who succeeded his mother following her death last Thursday, and his wife Camilla, the Queen Consort, are preparing to move their official offices to Buckingham Palace. It

is not clear whether the 317-year-old building will become the King's official residence, or if he will continue to reside in Clarence House, his London home for nearly two decades.

“Our staff have given long and loyal service and while some redundancies will be unavoidable, we are working urgently to identify alternative roles for the greatest possible number of staff,” the spokesperson said.

The Guardian newspaper reported that up to 100 employees had been told they could lose their jobs, some who had worked there for decades. They include personal servants such as footmen, valets, dressers and cooks, as well as clerical staff. The notifications were issued even as they were working to assist the new king during the accession process – including while a thanksgiving service for his mother was under way in Edinburgh, it said. Monday will be a national holiday for the queen's funeral.

The Public and Commercial Services Union condemned the decision to announce redundancies during the mourning period as “heartless”.

“While some changes across the households were to be expected, as roles across the Royal Family change, the scale and speed at which this has been announced is callous in the extreme,” union general secretary Mark Serwotka said.

The Clarence House spokesperson said the law required staff to be made aware of the situation at the earliest opportunity.

“Despite every effort to delay until after the funeral the advice remained the same,” he said. “Any staff being made redundant will be offered enhanced redundancy payments.”

Clarence House has been the official London residence of Charles and Camilla, employing 101 workers including 31 private secretaries. “Everybody is absolutely livid, including private secretaries and the senior team. All the staff have been working late every night since Thursday, to be met with this. People were visibly shaken by it,” an unnamed source was quoted by the newspaper as saying.

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Politician seduced tourists by posing as art expert at gallery, claims ex-minister



The MP is said to have targeted women at the Tate Britain in London (Getty)

SIMON WALTERS

An MP seduced female tourists at an art gallery, wine and dined them at the Commons and lured them back to his

Westminster flat the same day for sex, it is claimed in a new book.

The politician preyed on starstruck women by posing as an art expert, made fanciful claims about his power, and bought them dinner at parliament before inviting them home “for a nightcap”.

The following morning the woman would be sent “on her way” while the MP returned to his constituency “with a contented smile”, according to the extraordinary story told by former Tory cabinet minister Andrew Mitchell in the latest edition of his memoirs, *Beyond a Fringe*.

He does not name the “tall, handsome and immaculately turned out” politician but his book is bound to spark a Westminster guessing game to identify the politician.

Mr Mitchell, former international development secretary and chief whip, says of the MP: “Early each Wednesday morning he would take himself off to the Tate Britain art gallery, along the Embankment from the Palace of Westminster, where he would study at length and assiduously the dominating work of art that featured on that day.

“Armed with a coffee, he would then sit and wait until an attractive tourist – usually American – hove into view and started gazing approvingly at the picture. Moving up behind her, he’d point out the beauty of the brushwork and praise the exhibit as one of the artist’s most characteristic pieces.

“Thoroughly engaged, the woman would marvel at the MP’s knowledge of art, enquiring whether he was an art critic. ‘Not at all,’ he’d say, ‘I’m a member of the House of Commons’. Eyes wide, the woman would then find herself invited to the mother of parliaments, ‘I happen to have a spare ticket for Prime Minister’s Questions today. Might you be free to come and watch?’ And along she would come,” Mr Mitchell writes, to be told by a “flunky” that the MP would meet her afterwards.

But this was yet another ruse, explains the ex-minister. The woman would be informed, again falsely, that the MP had been called to an urgent meeting with his party leader and asked if she

was free for dinner at the Commons that evening instead. “Wow – yes please,” the MP’s impressed and starry-eyed new friend would reportedly exclaim.

Mr Mitchell writes: “And so matters would take their course. Our American would be wined and dined in the splendour of the Commons Churchill Room restaurant, heading off afterwards to the honourable member’s well-appointed Westminster pad, conveniently situated close to the House, for a nightcap.

“The following morning she’d be on her way and the MP would head off on the long journey to his constituency. It took most of the way to remove the contented smile from his features.”

In the book, Mr Mitchell says the MP’s behaviour was known among parliamentary colleagues in the 1990s. He declined to identify the individual, who is thought to be still alive.

The paperback edition of ‘Beyond a Fringe’ is published by Biteback on Tuesday

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Human rights groups sound alarm at foreign minister's links to repressive regimes



Leo Docherty has accepted more than £30,000 in hospitality from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and the UAE since 2017 (UK Parliament)

JON STONE

POLICY CORRESPONDENT

Human rights groups have raised concerns that a Tory MP who took more than £30,000 in hospitality from repressive Gulf states could be made minister for the Middle East. Leo Docherty was appointed as a minister of state at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office earlier this month as part of Liz Truss's new front bench.

The department has yet to say which portfolio he will be given, but campaigners say they are "extremely concerned" he might be put in charge of relations with the Middle East and North Africa. They say such an appointment would be "unthinkable" given the MP's "past patronage from some of the most repressive regimes in the world" and praise for them in parliament.

During the first 18 months since his election in 2017, Mr Docherty received £30,437 in paid-for trips from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait, according to his register of interests. And in 2017 he was subject of a formal complaint to the parliamentary commissioner for standards after failing to properly declare a paid-for trip to Saudi Arabia.

During a September 2018 parliamentary debate about Bahrain in which MPs expressed concerns about human rights in the country, Mr Doherty said he was "extremely proud" to be associated with the Gulf state – where Amnesty International says torture is used with "impunity".

"When we travel to Bahrain, we see a young country that has achieved remarkable development in a very short time," he said, adding that "there is a huge impulse in the ruling family to deliver reform and improvements".

In an article published in October 2018, Mr Doherty defended taking paid-for trips from the governments of other Gulf countries, saying Saudi Arabia "has for many years been hugely important strategically for the UK across many sectors". He described the UK as "a long-standing ally of our friends in Saudi Arabia and in the UAE".

The Foreign Office declined to comment on the campaigners' concerns but said portfolios for the ministers would be allocated

and announced in due course.

“This appointment has raised alarm bells among human rights groups,” said Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, director of advocacy at the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy. “Leo Docherty has repeatedly received gifts in the form of paid trips from Gulf states including Bahrain and Saudi Arabia and then praised them in parliament, despite their atrocious human rights abuses.

“We are extremely concerned that Leo Docherty has been made a Foreign Office minister and fear he may be given the Middle East brief even though his past patronage from some of the most repressive regimes in the world gives rise to an apparent conflict of interest which should make such an appointment unthinkable.”

And Lord Scriven, a Liberal Democrat peer and vice chair of the all-party parliamentary group on democracy and human rights in the Gulf, said it would be “frankly unacceptable” for a minister to have been “directly sponsored by those same states, receiving gifts in the form of lavish trips”.

Lord Scriven added: “He took selfies with the crown prince of Saudi Arabia while he was overseeing a military operation in Yemen, the world’s worst man-made humanitarian crisis, and who has overseen executing pro-democracy protesters in Saudi Arabia.

“He defended Bahrain during a parliamentary debate in which the ruling families’ human rights atrocities were laid bare, including against peaceful dissident Dr Abduljalil al-Singace, who has been refusing solid food for over a year, and Mohamed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa [who] face execution after attending pro-democracy protests.

“For all the government’s talk of a ‘global Britain’ and promises to stand up for human rights across the world, this appointment would indicate that the new Truss government and the Foreign Office will continue to turn a blind eye to atrocities committed in the region.”

In June this year Liz Truss, who was foreign secretary at the time, refused to criticise Saudi Arabia's human rights record. She said she "would describe the Gulf states as partners of the United Kingdom". She added: "Is every country that we work with exactly in line with the United Kingdom policy on everything? No they're not. But they're important allies of the United Kingdom."

As trade secretary in September 2019, she admitted illegally approving controlled arms sales to Saudi Arabia. The Court of Appeal had ruled that it was unlawful for the UK to approve weapons exports without assessing whether there was a "historic pattern of breaches of international humanitarian law" by Saudi forces operating in Yemen.

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Truss under pressure after EU agrees windfall tax plan



Ursula von der Leyen says it is wrong for energy companies to profit from the Ukraine war (EPA)

JON STONE

The prime minister, Liz Truss, has come under renewed pressure to extend the government's windfall tax on oil and gas giants, after the European Commission set out plans for a tougher levy as part of its plan to shield citizens from surging energy prices.

A draft of the EU plans would see oil, gas, coal and refining firms required to make a “solidarity contribution” of 33 per cent of their taxable surplus profits from the fiscal year 2022, compared to the 25 per cent levy imposed on UK-based firms by former chancellor Rishi Sunak earlier this year.

Ms Truss has set her face against another raid on excess profits calculated by the Treasury at as much as £170bn, causing economists to warn that ordinary taxpayers will be repaying the £100bn-plus cost of her emergency price freeze for decades to come.

Following yesterday’s commission announcement, TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady urged the PM and chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng to think again, arguing that she was asking the wrong people to foot the bill for soaring prices.

“The UK windfall tax is far too low,” Ms O’Grady told *The Independent*. “The chancellor should set it at a much higher rate in his mini-Budget next week. Otherwise he is leaving UK families to carry the cost of the energy bailout, while oil and gas giants get away with their profiteering.”

Under the EU’s draft proposal, non-fossil fuel electricity generation would also be subject to an excess revenue cap. Wind, solar and nuclear plants would have a revenue cap of €180 per megawatt-hour (MWh), with any excess skimmed off by national governments.

“In these times it is wrong to receive extraordinary record revenues and profits benefitting from war and on the back of our consumers,” commission president Ursula von der Leyen said in a speech at the European parliament in Strasbourg. “In these times, profits must be shared and channelled to those who need it most.”

The EU proposal will overlay a patchwork of national measures taken by the EU’s 27 member states with a more coherent bloc-wide response. The cash raised by the measures would go to fund support for consumers to deal with high energy bills, which have soared after Russia slashed gas deliveries in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine.

The commission's proposals would also impose a mandatory target for member states to cut electricity consumption by 5 per cent during the hours with the 10 per cent highest electricity demand each month. The plans have to be discussed and agreed by EU member states, with a summit of EU energy ministers on 30 September the likely venue for any agreement.

But Ms von der Leyen's plan steps back from earlier plans to cap the price of Russian gas imports. Instead, the commission proposes to set up a new task force with EU member state representatives that will attempt to negotiate deals with other key suppliers such as Norway.

Member states have taken individual action at a national level in response to the crisis, with countries like France capping prices and taking state producer EDF into public ownership. The German government is weighing up nationalising the country's biggest gas importer, Uniper SE, to prevent a collapse of the nation's energy system.

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Energy help for businesses unlikely before November



‘We will provide the support to cover their October bills and that support will be backdated as required,’ says the PM’s spokesperson (AFP/Getty/EPA)

ROB MERRICK

A promised bailout for businesses from rocketing energy bills is unlikely to be ready until November, No 10 has admitted – but the help will then be backdated to October. Downing Street

confirmed that officials are struggling to get the scheme to deliver “equivalent” help to that offered to households, which will be up and running next month.

But the prime minister’s spokesperson said: “We will provide the support to cover their October bills and that support will be backdated as required.” They also told anxious businesses that details of the scheme will be announced next week, once the national period of mourning following the Queen’s death is over.

Unlike households, business energy bills have not been frozen until 2024 and they have been promised only six months of “equivalent” relief, as many contracts come up for renewal. The head of the Night Time Industries Association has warned that seven out of 10 pubs are likely to close this winter without an urgent rescue package because they face unpayable bills.

The British Chambers of Commerce has now joined warnings of the economic price to be paid from any delay, arguing investment decisions will be put on hold. “The lack of detail on exactly how much help any individual business will get, and for how long, means very few will be planning to invest any time soon,” said Alex Veitch, its director of policy.

The spokesperson said the government still does not know whether it will require legislation to deliver the help to businesses, amid uncertainty about when the Commons will sit again. But they said, of ongoing talks with firms: “We did recognise there is concern about the support but what we are saying is that we will be providing the support to cover their October bills.”

Executives have been told in recent meetings with the government of the risk the scheme may not be ready until November, the *Financial Times* revealed. “It is not worked through yet,” said one government official. “I don’t know whether it will come in before November. There’s some debate about whether it can be brought forward and happen before then.”

Because there will be no energy price cap for businesses, they had been left in the dark when their bills will be reduced –

unlike households, for whom the freeze kicks in on 1 October. Many firms have fixed contracts lasting one or two years, but it is estimated that one in three have contracts that traditionally come up for renewal in October, before the winter.

Mr Veitch, added: “There are also a whole host of other issues ranging from transport and shipping costs, raw material prices, energy sector regulation and the tight labour market that must be addressed. It is imperative the government’s forthcoming ‘fiscal intervention’ provides business with confidence that there is a cohesive plan to take the economy forward.”

No 10 also confirmed a likely cut to the Commons recess period, with MPs currently not due to return until 17 October, saying: “We are looking at changing the recess dates.”

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Will EU action affect UK's rising energy prices stance?



A windfall tax imposed by the European Commission has increased political pressure on the UK government to relent over its opposition to such a tax (Getty)

SEAN O'GRADY

A little more than a decade ago the banking crash and subsequent euro crisis was supposed to break the European Union. Around six years ago, Brexit threatened to destabilise the union again. So did the migration crises. And later so did the Covid-19 pandemic. In February this year, the Russian invasion

of Ukraine and the energy crisis triggered another period of doubt.

And yet the European Union, for all its flaws and tribulations, is still standing. The sanctions on Russia, the drastic severing of gas supplies to Europe, and the soaring cost of hydrocarbons were supposed to have placed such intolerable strains on any sense of solidarity that the political independence of Europe would be threatened. Nato was the backstop in the face of a Russian steamroller that at one point was heading westwards.

Yet now, the EU and Nato are stronger and more aligned; and the European Commission has secured agreement among member states for a windfall tax on energy company profits to “cushion the blow” of the crisis. Some €140bn (£121bn) will be raised from the levy, which will help to defray the huge cost of supporting households and businesses in the EU from the effects of the shortages.

What’s more, commission president Ursula von der Leyen and the German government, in particular, have made great progress in saving energy and preserving stocks of gas, in preparation for winter. The influence of the EU has also helped to push member states towards sending more financial and military assistance eastwards.

Sweden and Finland have also joined Nato. After an uncertain and sometimes disappointing role during the Covid pandemic, the European Commission has redeemed itself.

From the point of view of Britain, the EU move can be taken both ways. Most of the public (according to the opinion polls) favour extending the existing windfall tax, as do all the opposition parties. For them, Von der Leyen’s success proves the practicality of the approach, and, at least for some, a reminder that Brexit has been a mistake, and Britain could have contributed to the decision-making which will affect the UK. For the government and “Leavers” (if that word has much meaning by this juncture), it is a reminder that the UK is free to take its own decisions, with government answerable to

parliament and the people. It is, in effect, the sovereignty argument made real.

For what it's worth, the EU example will increase political pressure on the government to relent on its adamant stance regarding a windfall tax. Or, rather, it would increase political pressure if politics had not been suspended for the duration of the regal mourning period. Parliament does not return (as it stands) until 17 October to the dismay of some. By that time, events will have moved on.

With luck, the energy crisis might even be receding if the war in Ukraine continues to proceed as it has recently. If not, and if the energy crisis actually worsens, then the government may have to think again, if only because it is running out of room to borrow such huge sums of money.

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Fracking companies lobby to ease earth tremor rules



Workers at Cuadrilla's fracking site in Preston New Road, Little Plumpton, Lancashire (PA)

SAPHORA SMITH
ROB MERRICK

Fracking firms are pushing for earthquake limits to be relaxed and want local objections to be bypassed ahead of Liz Truss lifting the ban in England. The new prime minister is expected to confirm the U-turn as early as next week – but the industry

body has told *The Independent* the move will only kickstart the industry if new rules are brought in to make fracking easier.

The government should include speeding up planning permission by allowing ministers, instead of local authorities, to approve projects as “nationally significant infrastructure”, it says. And it wants the rules requiring drilling to stop if it causes tremors of 0.5 or more on the Richter scale to be ripped up, arguing tremors at this level occur naturally and are often imperceptible.

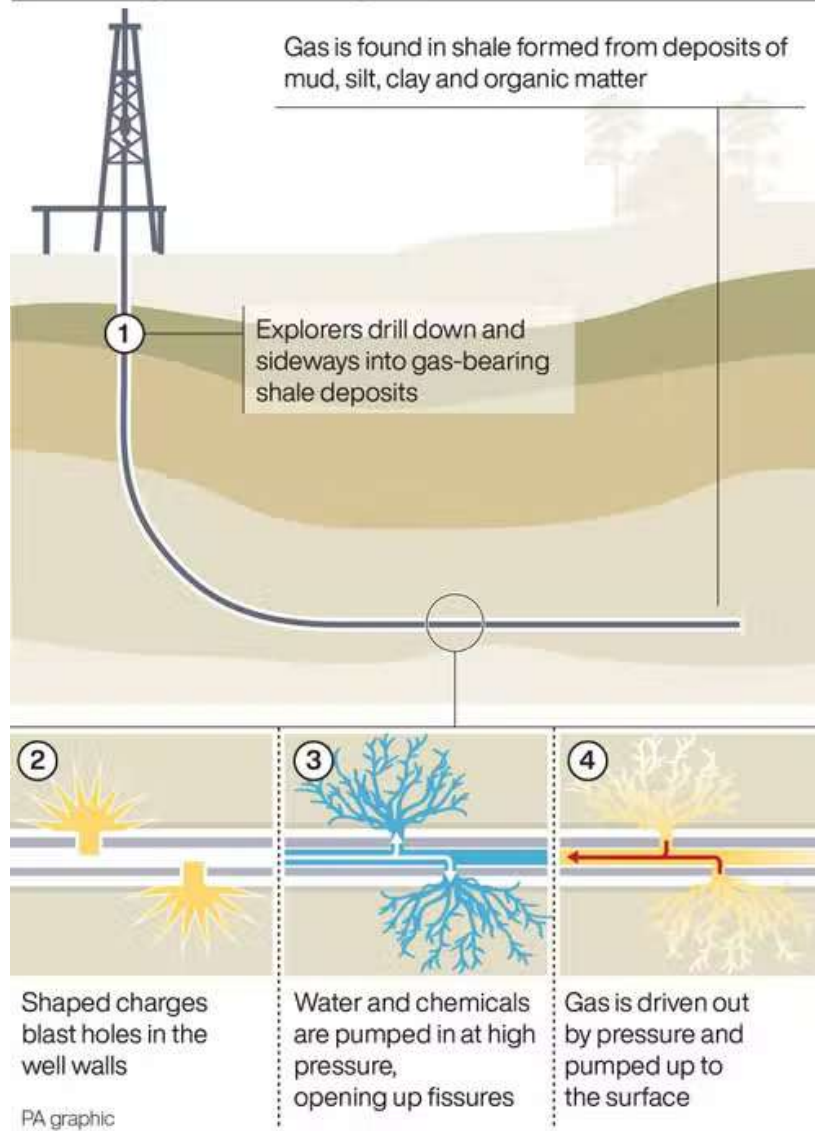
Fracking companies want parity with the geothermal energy and construction industries, which are allowed to create earthquakes of higher magnitudes than 0.5, they say.

“If the government just lifted the moratorium and didn’t offer comprehensive policy support, it would be very difficult to make an investment case,” said Charles McAllister, director of UK Onshore Oil and Gas (UKOOG). He called for changes to the government’s “traffic light system”, arguing that stopping drilling after a tremor of 0.5 or more prevents testing for suitable fracking sites.

Mr McAllister said: “If the regulations on seismicity applied to shale gas development were applied to other sectors, such as the construction, quarrying or geothermal industry, they would not be able to operate in the UK.”

James Verdon, a senior lecturer at the school of earth sciences at the University of Bristol, said it was true that geothermal projects in Cornwall have generated similar-sized events without the level of public concern.

Fracking: how shale gas is extracted



He also pointed to a study by Newcastle University published in 2015 which found that the maximum allowable levels of vibration for quarrying in the working day were 25 times larger than the estimated ground vibrations that would be generated by a 0.5-magnitude event caused by fracking.

But Friends of the Earth said the earthquake regulations “are there for a reason: to protect local communities and their environment”. Campaigner Danny Gross pointed out Ms Truss has said fracking should only go ahead with community support, so it should not be made harder for local people to have a say.

A moratorium on fracking has been in place since 2019 after a record 2.9-magnitude tremor was recorded near Cuadrilla’s test wells close to Blackpool. Scotland and Wales had already turned

their backs on the industry, which involves releasing natural gas from deep underground by blasting a mixture of water and chemicals into shale rock deposits.



Actor Emma Thompson takes part in an anti-fracking walk and silent protest at the Cuadrilla site (PA)

Ms Truss is expected to lift the ban once the official mourning period for Queen Elizabeth II is over, despite the previous objections of Kwasi Kwarteng, her new chancellor, and many Tory MPs. The government is also expected to publish the findings of a study by the British Geological Survey into whether the risks have altered.

UKOOG told *The Independent* last week that five shale gas companies in the UK – INEOS, Cuadrilla, Aurora, Egdon and iGas – are keen to pursue development. INEOS has already

renewed its offer to drill a shale gas test well in the UK to “prove we can do it safely and without harm to the environment”. The company declined to comment further on its next steps.

Earth scientists warned it is difficult to predict whether larger potentially damaging tremors will follow if fracking continues after a 0.5 magnitude has been recorded. “The community is not able to predict with confidence,” said Andrew Aplin, honorary professor at the Department of Earth Sciences at Durham University.

Stuart Haszeldine, a professor at the school of geosciences at the University of Edinburgh, said in a quarry operators are “engineering” the explosion so they know how much energy they’re putting into a blast that could cause ground shaking. In contrast, the amount of energy from fracking is unpredictable because it is released from naturally stressed rock and the tremors happen much deeper – affecting a wider area.

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Millions of birds culled as avian flu takes a huge toll



To date there have been 144 outbreaks in commercial premises across the country (Getty)

HARRY COCKBURN

ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

The UK is in the grip of its largest ever outbreak of avian influenza, with 2.8 million poultry and captive birds having been culled so far this year, the government has said.

While the devastating impact of the disease has been well documented among wild birds – especially in seabird populations around Scotland, Wales and northern England – the figures seen by *The Independent* reveal the enormous toll the outbreak is taking on livestock.

To date, there have been 144 outbreaks across the country on commercial premises, with 120 outbreaks in England, 11 cases in Scotland, seven cases in Wales, and six cases in Northern Ireland. Despite the millions of birds culled due to infection, the government said the numbers represent a small proportion of overall poultry production, which stands at around 20 million birds slaughtered a week.

The disease, known as highly pathogenic avian influenza, originated in intensively farmed poultry in China, but through wild populations of migrating birds, as well as global trade, the disease has spread to Europe and North America, having a significant impact on farms and local populations of birds.

The government said the risk of incursion of highly pathogenic avian influenza in wild birds is currently assessed as “medium” – meaning an event that occurs regularly. In total, more than 1,600 wild birds have tested positive, Defra said, but the real scale of the problem is far larger.

The RSPB’s Martin Fowlie told *The Independent*: “It has affected our seabirds on an unprecedented scale in what is undoubtedly the worst outbreak of the virus we’ve ever seen. We estimate the numbers affected are in the hundreds of thousands.”

Affected species include some of the UK’s globally important colonies of gannets, great skuas and terns, though a huge number of other species are known to be affected, including eagles and puffins.

Meanwhile, farmers are being heavily affected. James Mottershead, the National Farmers’ Union poultry board chair, told *The Independent* poultry farmers “do not want to experience another year like this one”, and urged those keeping birds to introduce strong biosecurity measures to protect livestock.

He said: “The poultry sector has experienced a very difficult year in regard to the threat of avian influenza. Maintaining good biosecurity measures is important for all bird keepers, whether you are a commercial farmer or someone who keeps a small number of hens in the garden.

He added: “We want to work with the government to minimise the impacts of any future outbreaks of avian influenza so that we do not experience another year like this one.”

Peter Stevenson, chief policy adviser at animal welfare campaign group Compassion in World Farming told *The Independent* the new figures are “shocking”, and could also undermine the move away from caged hens and towards free-range egg production.

He said: “This involves immense suffering for the birds, both during the disease, and when they are – what Defra calls ‘culled’ – slaughtered. This current outbreak is going on much longer than normal. The government and the industry love to scapegoat wild birds,” but he added that intensive farms had been the “root cause” with poorly maintained and cramped conditions in Chinese farms providing a breeding ground for the pathogen.

Under UK regulations, farmers are only able to label eggs as “free range” if the birds live outside for at least 40 weeks a year. If they are ordered to bring their flocks in due to worsening bird flu outbreaks, “it’s going to undermine that sector and discourage farmers from converting to free range”, Mr Stevenson said.

“We’ve got a range of welfare problems, an immense amount of suffering, free-range farmers are vulnerable, and it’s a very troubling situation,” he said, adding that a key solution was for farmers to improve welfare and provide livestock with more space.

Wales’ deputy chief veterinary officer Dr Gavin Watkins said last week the figures for the country were “cause for concern”. It is “evidence of the continuing risk that is out there”, he said.

The RSPB is calling for a dedicated task force to be set up by the government to build a national response plan. “We also need

clear guidance on wild bird carcass removal and disposal in high-risk areas,” Mr Fowlie said. “Effective monitoring, surveillance, research and reporting systems need to be developed to build real-time understanding of the virus and its progress in wild birds.”

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Sacking of Treasury chief criticised as ‘destabilising’



Senior Whitehall official says the removal of Sir Tom Scholar indicates the PM and chancellor want to surround themselves with ‘yes men and women’ (Getty)

ANDREW WOODCOCK

Mounting anger in Whitehall over the abrupt dismissal of the Treasury’s top official burst into the open yesterday as a former head of the civil service accused Liz Truss of “destabilising” her government’s impartial advisers.

Another former senior Whitehall mandarin said the sacking of Sir Tom Scholar indicated that Ms Truss and chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng want to surround themselves with “yes men and women”, adding: “That is a sure route to bad decision-making and weak government.”

Lord Wilson – who headed the civil service under Tony Blair – is the third former cabinet secretary to speak out over the sacking of Sir Tom Scholar, who was removed by chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng within days of Ms Truss’s appointment as prime minister.

The new PM railed against supposed “Treasury orthodoxy” during the Conservative leadership campaign, and has kicked off a hunt for a new department head who will back her controversial plan for £30bn of tax cuts largely benefiting the rich and corporations at a time of soaring inflation.

Former Treasury minister Lord Agnew on Tuesday defended the decision to sack Sir Tom, branding him the embodiment of “the malign influence of the Treasury orthodoxy”.

“Whether it was foot-dragging and passive resistance to creating a Treasury office in the north, which he fiercely resisted, or the botched arrangements in the construction of the bounce-back loans during the pandemic, all roads led back to him,” said Lord Agnew.

But Lord Wilson – cabinet secretary between 1998 and 2002 – said such attacks were “ill-judged”.

“To summarily dismiss a key top official, judged by most people to be outstanding, at this moment is destabilising,” he said. “It may affect morale; there has already been a distressing loss of talent over the past decade.”

Attacks by politicians on the civil service were “self-destructive”, he said. “It looks like an attempt to shift on to institutions the blame for the failure of ministers’ own past policies. Civil servants will implement whatever the government decides, loyally and with energy, as they always have done. This should be a moment for bonding, not attacking.”

Former Home Office permanent secretary Sir David Normington also added his voice to the chorus of mandarin outrage.

Lord Agnew's broadside "follows an age-old formula – if you cannot get your way in government, attack the civil service and throw in a few slurs about metropolitan elites on the way," said Sir David, who led the Education Department from 2001-05 and the Home Office until 2011 before being appointed First Civil Service Commissioner.

"The sad fact is that in sacking Sir Tom Scholar, one of the ablest civil servants of his generation, the prime minister and chancellor have sent a clear message to the civil service that they are not interested in impartial advice and intend to surround themselves with 'yes' men and women. That is a sure route to bad decision-making and weak government. It is also another small step on the road to politicising the civil service."

Sir David said it was "disappointing" that current cabinet secretary, Simon Case – who is remaining in post despite earlier indications that Ms Truss wanted to remove him – had "failed to stand up for the values of the civil service" by acquiescing in Scholar's dismissal.

Former cabinet secretaries Lord O'Donnell and Lord Butler have already voiced their dismay at Sir Tom's removal, meaning that protests have been made by all but one of those who led the civil service between 1988 and 2012. During his 30 years as a civil servant, Sir Tom, 53, worked closely with both Gordon Brown and David Cameron before taking the top Treasury job in 2016.

He served as Mr Brown's principal private secretary before moving to Washington as the UK representative at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. He then worked as chief of staff for the last Labour PM and returned to a senior post at the Treasury at the height of the banking crisis. He was senior adviser on Europe to Mr Cameron.

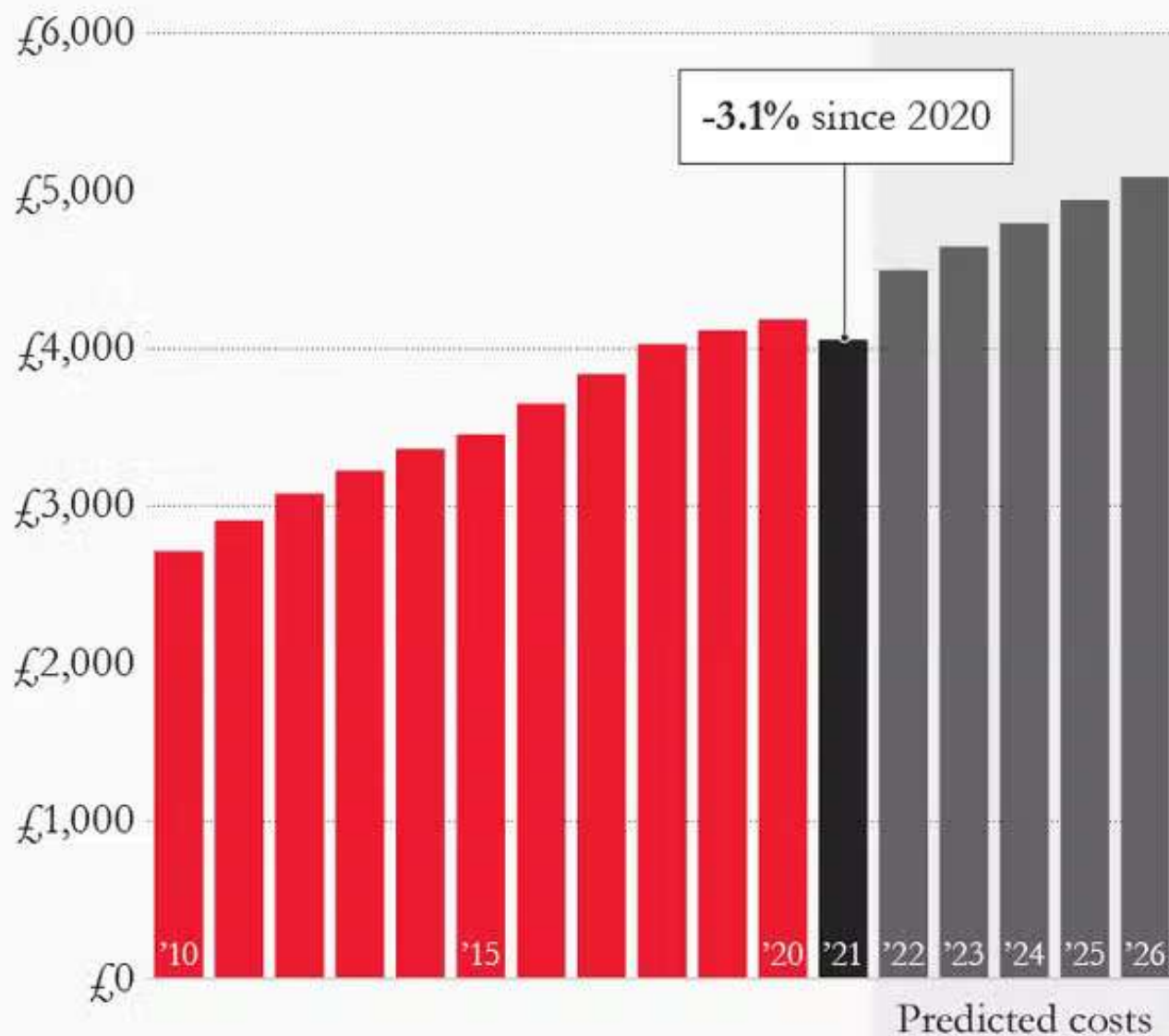
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By Numbers Funeral costs

Average expenditure in the UK



Source: SunLife



Pictures of the Day



Playing ball

USA's Evita Griskenas competes in the individual all-around qualification round during the 39th FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships at the Arena Armeets in Sofia, Bulgaria.

AFP/Getty



Clouding over

People cross a bridge in Shanghai in rains and winds brought by Typhoon Muifa. *Reuters*



Clearing the way

Members of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike demolish an illegal construction during a drive against encroachment near storm drains, alleged to have caused recent flooding after rain in Bangalore, India. *EPA*



Having visions

People watch a light show of animations and images projected on the facade of the Barrack Block of Tai Kwun, the historic former police headquarters, in Hong Kong. *AFP/Getty*



Keeping your head

A woman sells traditional fabrics on a beach in Kuta, Bali. *EPA*

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Home news in brief



Olivia Pratt-Korbel died after she was shot by a gunman chasing a convicted burglar into her home in Dovecot, Liverpool (PA)

Reward of £50k offered in hunt for nine-year-old's killer

A £50,000 reward is being offered to find the gunman who killed nine-year-old Olivia Pratt-Korbel. Tory peer Lord Ashcroft, founder and chair of Crimestoppers, offered the donation through his charity in return for information that leads to the conviction of those responsible for the schoolgirl's death. Olivia died after she was shot by a gunman chasing convicted

burglar Joseph Nee into her home in Dovecot, Liverpool, on 22 August.

Her mother, Cheryl Korbel, was shot in the wrist as she tried to close the door on the gunman before the bullet travelled behind her and hit Olivia in the chest. Merseyside Police have arrested nine men as part of their investigation but all have since been bailed.

Man jailed for having gun used to murder journalist

A man who stored the gun used to murder journalist Lyra McKee has been jailed for seven years. Niall Sheerin was handed the sentence after pleading guilty to possession of a pistol and ammunition with intent to enable another person to endanger life, although judges were clear they were not sentencing him in connection with the murder. At a hearing, a defence barrister insisted Sheerin had no knowledge of how the weapon had been used prior to him storing it for a “short period of time”. McKee, 29, was shot dead on 18 April 2019 while she observed rioting in the Creggan area of Derry. Her killer has never been found and the investigation into her murder continues.

The gun used to kill the journalist – a Hammerli X-Esse .22 pistol – was found wrapped in plastic bags in a hollow behind a telegraph pole in a field in the Ballymagroarty area of Derry in 2020. DNA linked to Sheerin was found on the weapon and ballistics tests showed the pistol had been used in five shootings in the city in the previous 21 months, including McKee’s murder.

Premier League matches to honour Queen with national anthem

The national anthem will be played before all Premier League games this weekend, as a show of respect towards Queen Elizabeth II. Managers will also be encouraged to wear suits and lead their teams out, and there will be a minute’s applause 70 minutes into matches to mark the number of years of the Queen’s reign. The league later confirmed that screens and

advertising boards within stadiums would carry tributes and that flags will fly at half-mast.

This weekend's matches represent the first games being played after a criticised decision to postpone a full programme last weekend, with the Premier League wanting to be seen to pay appropriate respects to the monarch, who had also been a patron of the Football Association. The circumstances have led to some controversy over the schedule, as some clubs will now go over a month without playing in the Premier League.

Police launch murder inquiry after mother and child found dead

A 12-year-old girl who was found dead at a property alongside her mother was stabbed in the abdomen, police have said. A post-mortem examination also revealed that the mother, who has not been identified, died of pressure to the neck. Police, who found the two after being called to a house in the village of Great Waldingfield, Sudbury, also discovered a man with serious injuries at the property. The 46-year-old has been arrested on suspicion of two counts of murder and remains in hospital in a stable condition. Officers are treating it as a contained incident, with no wider threat to the community, and believe all three people were known to each other.

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Liberated Ukrainians tell of beatings and executions under Russian occupation

The memories many in Balakliya will hold of the invading forces will be of an army demoralised and disorganised



A civilian in Balakliya rides past a destroyed armoured vehicle (AFP/Getty)

KIM SENGUPTA
ANDRYI MAKARENKO
IN BALAKLIYA

Ukrainian troops retook the town Balakliya with surprising ease during their astonishingly fast advance, with the enemy putting up little resistance. But with liberation has come tales of killings and torture, a grim hallmark of Russian occupation in so many parts of Ukraine. Balakliya was the first target liberated by Ukrainian troops in their sweeping and successful counteroffensive in the Kharkiv oblast, breaking through Russian lines.

Balakliya has not suffered like Bucha, the town outside Kyiv that became a byword for Russian atrocities. But there are accounts of executions, beatings, looting and arbitrary arrests. Ukrainian investigators have arrived to search for evidence of war crimes as well as to hunt down alleged collaborators.



A local woman passes a destroyed building in Balakliya (AFP/Getty)

Five corpses have been found of people who were killed. Two were shot dead at a checkpoint three days before Ukrainian forces arrived. Residents buried the bodies, which had been dumped at a roadside. They have since been exhumed and taken to the regional capital, Kharkiv.

Between 40 and 300 civilians were held at the local police station at various times, some for weeks on end. Half a dozen small, dimly lit holding cells were used for interrogation. This involved multiple counts of torture, said Ukrainian investigators, one of them pointing to dark splotches on walls.



A monument to Ukrainian writer and politician Taras Shevchenko (Handout)

Nicolai was among those dragged to the police station after being accused of secretly helping Ukrainian forces. “They first came to my house looking for a neighbour who they said was a spy. I told them he and his family had left a long time ago, and that was the truth”, said the 42-year-old. “But they came back the next day, they said I was in conspiracy with my neighbour and took me off to the police station.

“I kept on telling them they were mistaken. Firstly it was slaps, then a young man came in and the real beating began. They punched me in the face. Then they pulled me up from the chair I was sitting in and started punching me in the stomach – it went on for a long time. They kept showing me photos of people I didn’t know. They eventually took me back to the cell with the others. I started pissing blood when I went to the toilet.

“I had one more session of beating the next day, but they must have realised there was nothing I could tell them. I was released after four days and went to the local hospital for treatment for injuries; they found I had a broken rib.”

He added: “I am very glad we are now back in Ukraine again, I am sure our soldiers are doing so well, they will keep taking back our land,” said Nicolai, who did not want to give his family name “ in case the Rashists [Russians] came back.”



**A recovered stash of Russian ammunition and weapons
(Handout/Ukrainian military)**

Serhiy Bolvinov, chief of investigations for Kharkiv, said: “We are investigating a number of cases including the two people killed at the [checkpoint]. We have discovered bullet holes in the bodies. The inquiries will continue; we think we shall find other cases, unfortunately.”

Ukrainian officials claim that a network of collaborators helped the Russians and vowed to track them down. A Ukrainian intelligence service official said: “This is a pattern we have seen since the invasion. They have people in place before they move in. Some of them would have fled with the Russians, but others would still be here.”

Yuri Husak, who has lived in the town for 38 of his 51 years, said: “We have around 27,000 people living here. Strangers are noticed, so the collaborators must have been local people. I have heard there were collaborators here, but they would not be hanging around, they have gone. And anyway, they couldn’t help the Russians keep this place in the end.”



Abandoned Russian military vehicles in Balakliya (AFP via Getty)

The memories many in Balakliya will hold of the Russians will be of an army demoralised and disorganised – disappearing, at the end, in a chaotic retreat, abandoning weapons. Twisted skeletons of tanks and armoured cars hit by Ukrainian fire lie on the routes in and out of the town.

“At the end, the Russians were hiding in offices, in peoples’ houses, in gardens. They were not putting up a fight, they were just trying to get away. They were running between the rockets and cannons our side was firing”, said Svetlana Volkova. “ One group had to turn back after one of the bridges they wanted to use was blown up. There was a lot of confusion.”

Ms Volkova, 73, saw that a lot of the Russian soldiers were quite young. “They lived in their barracks but I talked to a few of them when they came to the centre. Some of them were so young I used to say to them, ‘What are you doing here? You should be at home with your family!’ A few said they wished they were. They had been ordered to come.

“I am a grandmother, some of them looked the same age as my grandsons. I did not want to see them die. I don’t blame them, I blame Putin for sending them here. What is the point of killing off the young people of your country?”

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‘Life comes back’ to city as Zelensky visits Kharkiv area



The Ukrainian president attended a flag-raising ceremony in the recaptured Izium yesterday (AFP)

RORY SULLIVAN

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has visited the recently recaptured city of Izium to thank his troops for their bravery.

In a counterattack that took Moscow by surprise, Kyiv's forces have pushed the Russian army out of much of Kharkiv province

in less than a week. Mr Zelensky said his soldiers have retaken around 8,000 sq km in the northeast province, in a humiliating blow for Vladimir Putin.

Mr Zelensky was later involved in a car accident yesterday, but was not seriously hurt, officials have said. The leader's vehicle was involved in a traffic accident in Kyiv, and the president was later seen by a doctor.

Yesterday, the Ukrainian president, who has paid many surprise visits to the front lines during the war, attended a flag-raising ceremony in Iziium, a city used as an important supply hub by the Russian occupiers. He was pictured with soldiers and the deputy defence minister Hanna Malyar. Much of the city has been destroyed by airstrikes, with piles of rubble lying where homes used to stand. "The view is very shocking but it is not shocking for me," Mr Zelensky told onlookers there.

The war-time leader added that Ukrainian bodies had been discovered there like they had in Bucha, a suburb of Kyiv where Russian troops are accused of torturing and killing civilians earlier in the war. Mr Zelensky expressed confidence that the perpetrators would be brought to justice. "I am sure there will be sentencing, there will be a tribunal – not for one day do I doubt this," he said.

The 44-year-old also said Russia will be unable to hold onto Ukrainian land for long. "It is probably possible to temporarily occupy the territory of our state. But it is definitely impossible to occupy our people, the Ukrainian people," he said. "Before, when we looked up, we always looked for the blue sky, the sun. And today we, and especially the people in the temporarily occupied territories, looking up, are looking for only one thing – the flag of our state. This means the heroes are here. This means the enemy is gone, they have fled."

Amid the ruins of Iziium, Mr Zelensky stressed the importance of his troops' liberation efforts. "Our soldiers are here. That's a very important thing," he said. "I see how people meet them, in what a sensitive moment. It means that with our army, the life comes back." This comes as Ukraine consolidates its newly

recaptured territory and attempts to make further advances. In the Kharkiv region, this counteroffensive could involve threatening Russian positions behind the Oskil River.

“Ukrainian forces are continuing localised ground assaults to threaten Russian positions behind the Oskil River,” experts at the Institute for the Study of War said. “Russian troops are unlikely to be strong enough to prevent further Ukrainian advances along the entire Oskil River because they do not appear to be receiving reinforcements, and Ukrainian troops will likely be able to exploit this weakness to resume the counteroffensive across the Oskil if they choose.”

As Ukraine’s counterattack in Kharkiv region met with success, Mr Zelensky expressed his belief that this winter could be a “turning point” in the war. “I believe that this winter is a turning point, and it can lead to the rapid de-occupation of Ukraine,” he said on Saturday.

The Ukrainian president has pledged to expel Russian troops from all parts of Ukraine, including Crimea, a peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014. “We will come. I don’t know when. Nobody knows when. But we have plans, so we’ll come, because it’s our land and our people,” he said.

“The president was examined by a doctor, no serious injuries were found,” spokesperson Sergii Nykyforov wrote on social media after the car accident. He said that medics accompanying Mr Zelensky gave the driver of the private car emergency aid and put him in an ambulance. He added that the cause of the accident would be investigated.

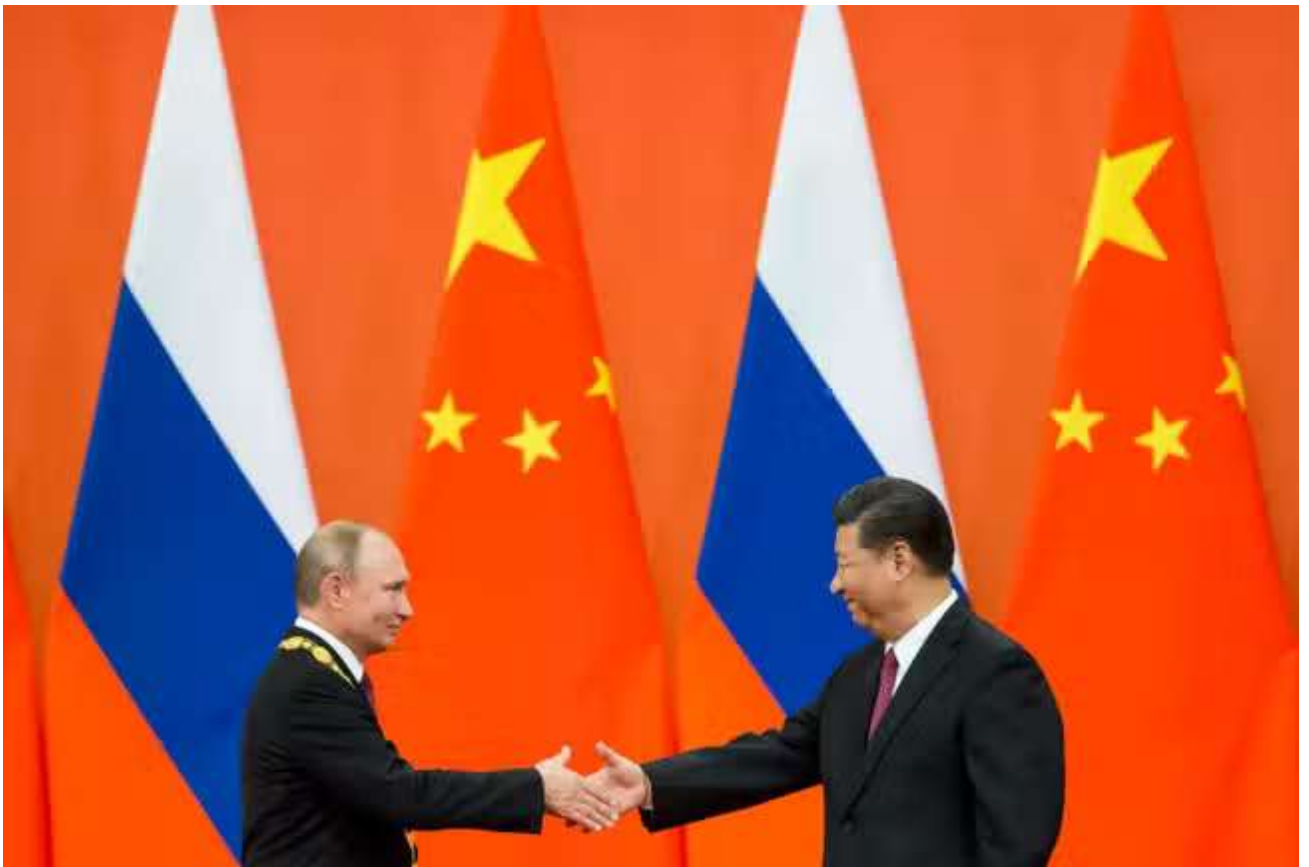
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Iran set to be embraced by bloc headed by Putin and Xi



Russian president Vladimir Putin and Chinese president Xi Jinping in Beijing (AP)

BORZOU DARAGAH

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

A major security and economic bloc will move closer to embracing Iran as a fully-fledged member this week, in an alignment that could ease the impact of any sanctions on Tehran, bolster its strategic position and strengthen the alliance led by Moscow and Beijing.

Iran has for years sought to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a trading and security alliance of mostly authoritarian states that aspires to be a Eurasian alternative to the G7. The summit will take place in the historic Silk Road crossroads city of Samarkand in Uzbekistan.

“There is only one way out of the dangerous spiral of problems in an interconnected world where we all live today – through constructive dialogue and multilateral cooperation based on consideration and respect for everyone’s interests,” Uzbek president Shavkat Mirziyoyev wrote in an article ahead of the summit.

Chinese president Xi Jinping, on his first foreign trip since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, was in Kazakhstan yesterday, ahead of a face-to-face meeting with Russian president Vladimir Putin at the summit today, their first since before the Ukraine war.

Mr Putin’s scheduled appearance comes after his forces suffered devastating military losses in northeastern Ukraine and an increase in public criticism at home about the cost of his seven-month war.

The SCO, meeting this week for its 22nd leadership summit, has struggled for relevance since its formation more than two decades ago. It lacks enforcement mechanisms, and commerce within the bloc is negligible, with most member states still dependent on the West for trade and technological know-how. But it could gain new importance as hostilities mount between the West and Eurasian powers Russia and China over the Ukraine war, Taiwan and a widening range of other geopolitical and commercial matters.



A police officer stands guard in Registan Square, Samarkand (AFP/Getty)

Other full members of the SCO are India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Together the bloc comprises 40 per cent of the world's population and nearly a third of its economy. SCO observer states include Afghanistan, Belarus and Mongolia. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey are partners and will send heads of state or high-level envoys. None of the countries are known as paragons of democracy and rule of law, and most are drifting deeper into authoritarianism.

“It’s an organisation consisting of non-democratic regimes,” said Anna Jordanova, a scholar focusing on Central Asian politics at the Association for International Affairs, a think tank in Prague. “The SCO helps to represent regimes the way they look now. It helps to solidify the status quo.”

Mr Putin’s appearance alongside other world leaders could improve his standing among Russians worried that Moscow’s war against Ukraine is damaging its international standing. On the other hand, other leaders may treat Mr Putin coolly at the summit, further diminishing him. While its economic relevance flounders, Ms Jordanova said the SCO could come together over the stability of Afghanistan. The country was taken over by the Taliban last year and was the main subject of the 2021 summit.

Iran's integration into the SCO not only gives the organisation a foothold in the Middle East and along the Persian Gulf but could assist in Afghanistan's stabilisation efforts, said Ms Jordanova. Iran is currently at a diplomatic crossroads over the restoration of an imperilled nuclear deal that could improve its economic and political ties to the West, or further sour relations if talks collapse.

"From the perspective of Tehran, SCO membership can help legitimise the current regime and strengthen the position of the government," said Ms Jordanova. "It can be a message to the West that Iran has alternatives," she said. "Iran can't cut all ties to the West and turn completely to the East. But SCO membership can give Iran benefits in the longer term."

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Woman in Beirut robs bank with toy gun to get savings



Lebanese Sali Hafez, centre, looks at her phone after breaking into a Blom Bank branch (AP)

KAREEM CHEHAYEB

A woman brandishing a toy pistol broke into a Beirut bank yesterday, taking \$13,000 (£11,000) from her trapped savings.

Sali Hafez told the local Al Jadeed TV station that she needed the money to fund her sister's cancer treatment. She said she

had repeatedly visited the bank to ask for her money and was told she could only receive \$200 a month in Lebanese pounds.

She said the toy pistol belonged to her nephew, and she apparently entered the bank with activists. “I had begged the branch manager before for my money, and I told him my sister was dying, didn’t have much time left,” she said in the interview. “I reached a point where I had nothing else to lose.”

Lebanon’s cash-strapped banks have imposed strict limits on withdrawals of foreign currency since 2019, tying up the savings of millions of people. About three-quarters of the population has slipped into poverty as the tiny Mediterranean country’s economy continues to spiral.

Sali Hafez and activists from a group called Depositors’ Outcry entered the Blom Bank branch and stormed into the manager’s office. They forced bank employees to hand over \$12,000 and the equivalent of about \$1,000 in Lebanese pounds. Ms Hafez said she had a total of \$20,000 in savings trapped in the bank. She said she had already sold many of her personal belongings and had considered selling her kidney to fund her 23-year-old sister’s cancer treatment.

Nadine Nakhal, a bank customer, said the intruders “doused gasoline everywhere inside, and took out a lighter and threatened to light it.” She said the woman with the pistol threatened to shoot the manager if she did not receive her money.



A Lebanese bank worker holds notes during the drama (EPA)

Ms Hafez said in a live-streamed video she posted on her Facebook account that she did not intend to do harm. “I did not break into the bank to kill anyone or set the place on fire,” she said. “I am here to get my rights.”

She was celebrated as a hero across social media in Lebanon, as many in the small crisis-hit country struggle to make ends meet and retrieve their savings. She encouraged others to take similar action to reclaim their savings. Some of the activists entered the bank with Hafez, while others staged a protest at the entrance. She eventually left with cash in a plastic bag, witnesses said.

Security forces standing outside arrested several of the activists, including a man carrying what looked like a handgun. It was not immediately clear if this was also a toy gun.

Meanwhile, who heads the Depositors’ Outcry protest group, said that a man communicating and coordinating with the group broke into a bank in the mountainous town of Aley to retrieve his trapped savings. Local media reported that the man entered the Bankmed branch alone with a shotgun without any shells loaded but was unable to retrieve his savings before he was apprehended.

Both incidents occurred weeks after a food delivery driver broke into another bank branch in Beirut and held 10 people hostage for seven hours, demanding tens of thousands of dollars in his trapped savings. Most hailed him as a hero.

“There is no government, no economic recovery plan, and little reserves left,” Mr Khorchid said, adding that people have no choice but to “take matters into their own hands”.

“These people worked for decades, but not for the rulers to build palaces while they can’t afford a bottle of medicine.”

Lebanon has scrambled for over two years to implement key reforms in its decimated banking sector and economy. It has so far failed to reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund on a recovery programme that would unlock billions of

dollars in international loans and aid to make the country viable again.

Its government has struggled to function in a caretaker capacity since elections in May. In the meantime, millions are struggling to cope with rampant power outages and soaring inflation.

“We need to put a stop to everything that is happening to us in this country,” Ms Nakhal said. “Everyone’s money is stuck in the banks, and in this case, it’s someone who is sick. We need to find a solution.”

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Kazakhstan changes capital city's name back to Astana



The city gained official status as the Kazakh capital in 1997 (Getty)

MAROOSHA MUZAFFAR

Kazakhstan's president is to restore the former name of the country's capital, Astana, just three years after he renamed it in honour of his predecessor.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev changed the city's name to Nur-Sultan in 2019 in a nod to his predecessor and the first post-Soviet president, Nursultan Nazarbayev. It became the capital of the central Asian nation in 1997 after taking over the role from Almaty.

The president's spokesperson, Mr Zheliban, said that Mr Tokayev agreed to change the name of the capital after an initiative by a group of parliament members.

“The president is informed about this initiative by deputies, who in turn relied on suggestions repeatedly expressed during meetings with the population, as well as in numerous addresses from citizens during the referendum.

“At the same time, the president sees Nursultan Nazarbayev's decisive role in strengthening the modern statehood of Kazakhstan and the establishment of the capital as a historical fact,” the spokesperson said.

“Therefore, other landmarks named after the first president will keep their names.”

The name of Kazakhstan itself was nearly changed in 2014 when Mr Nazarbayev suggested it become Kazak Yeli in order to distinguish the country from its “poorer” neighbours in other “stans”.

Mr Nazarbayev turned Astana into a showplace of gaudy architecture, including an observation tower where visitors can place their hands in a print of his own.

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World news in brief



Criminals are using private jets to smuggle migrants from Turkey to Western Europe (Getty)

Italian police swoop on gang smuggling migrants via private jet

Police have arrested five people in Rome and Brussels for smuggling migrants from Turkey to Western Europe on private jets.

Each migrant passenger would pay around €10,000 (£8,600), Italian police said yesterday. They would be given fake diplomatic papers from St Kitts and Nevis and put on an aircraft headed to the Caribbean state with a stopover in Europe. Upon

landing in a European airport, the migrants, described as mostly ethnic Kurds or Iraqis, would get off, declare their real identity and file for asylum, Italian police said.

The suspects are accused of belonging to a criminal organisation aimed at assisting illegal immigration, a statement said.

Investigators documented five separate landings in Italy, Germany, France, Austria and Belgium between October and December 2020. The suspects were arrested following joint investigations by police forces from the five European countries, with help from US authorities.

Pastor who raped hundreds forced victims to call him ‘uncle’

Five women are suing an international megachurch and its leader Naason Joaquin Garcia, a convicted felon, in California state court over decades of alleged child sexual abuse and human trafficking. The 53-year-old leader of the “Church of the Living God, Pillar and Ground of the Truth; The Light of the World”, or simply La Luz del Mundo, admitted to various child sex crimes earlier this year and was convicted and sentenced to nearly 17 years in prison.

Among many disturbing details, the new lawsuit claimed one of the five plaintiffs said she was “forced to call [Garcia] ‘uncle’ while he was raping, assaulting, and molesting her because it excited him to be sexually abusing his niece, a family member”. The fresh lawsuit anticipates a class of additional victims numbering in the hundreds, reported Law & Crime.

US will no longer have Christian majority by 2070

The United States remains home to more Christians than any other country in the world. By 2070, those demographics could see a shift and the religion that has long been the country’s majority denomination could become a minority, according to a new study.

“If recent trends in religious switching continue, Christians could make up less than half of the US population within a few

decades,” to as little as a third, modellers from the Pew Research Centre wrote in a new study released on Tuesday. The projections, which used the country’s current religious composition as the jumping-off point, were made by considering religious differences by age and sex, birth rates, migration patterns and rates of “religious switching”.

“Switching, which in some cases could be described as religious conversion, is defined in this report as a change between the religion in which a person was raised (in childhood) and their present religious identity (in adulthood),” the report defines the term as. The report projects four possible landscapes in the US, all with varying rates of religious switching, which has steadily been speeding up since the 1990s. In all four projections, the religiously unaffiliated, otherwise referred to as the “nones”, increased.

Vettel takes aim at ‘ego’ of Italian president

Sebastian Vettel took aim at the “ego” of the Italian president with the four-time world champion claiming Sergio Mattarella ordered the flybys which took place before Sunday’s Italian Grand Prix. Formula 1 banned flypasts before races this season in their push for a more sustainable future yet the Frecce Tricolori did two flypasts ahead of the race at Monza.

Vettel, who is retiring from F1 at the end of the season, is a climate change and environmental activist and was left unimpressed with the pre-race show, claiming 81-year-old Mattarella forced a change of hand from Formula One.

“I hope they [Monza] stop doing the flybys,” Vettel said. “I heard the president [Mattarella] was insisting to have the flybys. He’s about 100 years old, so maybe it’s difficult for him to let go of this kind of ego thing.”

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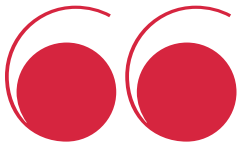


Why is Chris Kaba's family having to fight for answers?



If someone ended up dead in most other lines of work, that would be cause for immediate suspension (PA)

BELL RIBEIRO-ADDY



Last Monday, Chris Kaba was run off the road during a police pursuit on Kirkstall Gardens, a quiet residential street in the heart of my Streatham constituency, before he was shot and killed. Photographs taken the morning after at the scene show a single bullet hole bored through the driver's side of the car windscreen.

One week on, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has now confirmed that Chris was unarmed and that the car that triggered his pursuit was not registered to him. But Chris's loved ones are still in the dark over the exact circumstances that led up to his death.

Chris's killing has reverberated through the community. As a Lambeth MP, my constituency is located in a borough with some of the lowest expressed levels of confidence in policing anywhere in London. Just 38 per cent of people trust the police to treat everyone fairly no matter who they are, according to the latest public attitudes survey on policing from the London mayor's office.

Chris is not the first young Black man to die after contact with the police. According to the charity Inquest, 1,883 people have died in custody or following contact with the police since 1990, with just one prosecution of an officer in that time period. Families have been left waiting decades for answers, let alone justice. Chris's family know they will face a protracted fight for answers, and perhaps a longer one still for genuine accountability.

Chris's killing comes after a catalogue of recent local incidents: from disclosures about police strip searches of Black children in our borough, to the death of Ian Taylor in police custody just up the road in Brixton as he struggled to breathe. People are angry that this is still happening. These events reflect deeper issues with institutional racism in policing. Without acknowledgement and commitments to act on this, apologies from Met leadership are just reputation management.

This case also shows how accountability is still something that has to be fought for; not something that is hardwired into policing. If someone ended up dead in most other lines of work, that would be cause for immediate suspension. It took several interventions from the family, campaigners and MPs for the Met to suspend the officer who fired the shot.

It also took several days for the IOPC to escalate this case to a homicide investigation. Only time will tell if this delay proves costly. It shouldn't require vast amounts of public pressure to trigger what should be basic features of police accountability.

We do need a full and thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding Chris's killing. However, there is no reason that police or the IOPC could not have communicated with Chris's family in the same way they have during other similar incidents.

Their wishes now are simple. They want a timeline for the IOPC investigation so that they know when they can expect answers. They want access to the body cam footage so they can see for themselves what happened that night and start to get closure. And above all, they want accountability for Chris's death.

True justice is a society where unarmed Black men can go about their lives without fear of violence from those supposedly tasked with protecting them



When people die during police contact, we always hear how important it is to get the full facts before jumping to conclusions. But this presumption of innocence is one that is seldom extended to those who end up dead.

Where there's a lack of information, stereotypes fill the vacuum. Prejudice mushrooms and multiplies in the dark. There seems to be a reflexive belief that the person in question must have done

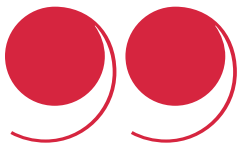
something wrong to deserve such treatment – a trope which has roots in colonial stereotypes of Black people as unruly subjects: violent and criminal.

Rather than dwelling on the fact that Chris was a father-to-be and an architecture student, who was loved by his family and his community, and was unarmed, the knee-jerk response in certain sections of the media was to foreground his association with drill music and focus on the mistakes he had made in the past.

The new Met commissioner Mark Rowley took up his role this week, promising to act with "fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality" and pledging to renew "policing by consent". If this is more than just rhetoric, he will start by honouring Chris's family in their call for answers and accountability.

But true justice is a society where unarmed Black men can go about their lives without fear of violence from those supposedly tasked with protecting them. With a government hell-bent on ramping up policing and presiding over ever-worsening inequalities, we have a huge struggle ahead to realise this vision.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy is the Labour MP for Streatham



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If Starmer is clever, he will listen to Brown on the union



The former prime minister argues that the path to keep Scotland in the union must include 'fixing' England (Getty)

ANDREW GRICE



King Charles's warm welcome in Scotland and Northern Ireland during his UK tour cannot mask the fact that he will face a more difficult task than the Queen in holding the union together. It is not impossible that it breaks apart during his reign.

It would not be about him; political developments in Scotland and Northern Ireland after Brexit would also have tested to the full his late mother's powers to keep the UK together. If, as expected, the Supreme Court rules that the Scottish parliament does not have the power to call an independence referendum, the Scottish National Party will make the next general election a plebiscite on the issue. It is not going to go away even if Liz Truss ignores Nicola Sturgeon – her crass promise to Tory activists during the leadership election.

In Northern Ireland, too, Truss will have to cast aside her campaign rhetoric if a deal is to be reached with the EU on post-Brexit rules on goods moving from Great Britain to the North. The alternative – a damaging trade war with the EU and continued paralysis in Northern Ireland's devolved institutions – could increase public support for a united Ireland.

Having a new monarch makes it a good time to think about the way the UK works – or, more accurately, doesn't. As it happens, a draft report on constitutional change is being quietly discussed within Labour's high command and is due to be published in November.

Gordon Brown, who was asked to review the constitution by Keir Starmer, will propose some new powers for Scotland's devolved institutions but insist that is not the answer to the independence question. Brown's commission will outline measures to give Scotland enhanced nationhood within the UK, so its institutions work better and more cooperatively with Westminster to secure a bigger voice in the UK and around the world.

An elected House of Lords would include representatives from the UK's four nations. Abolishing the unelected Lords, already Labour policy but not always shouted from the rooftops, could cause tension with the King and test his modernising credentials. The Queen was said to be unhappy about the Blair government's decision to remove from the Lords most members of the hereditary club to which she also belonged.

Brown's hope is that offering change would appeal to "middle Scotland", the 40 per cent who are undecided on independence, and even some who currently support a breakaway. However, his report contains more proposals about England than Scotland, because the "English question" is the missing piece of the UK's devolution settlement.

Some Starmer advisers think there are few votes in talking about dry constitutional matters during an economic crisis



The former prime minister argues that the path to keep Scotland in the union must include "fixing" England, warning that a very centralised UK will slip further down the international league table without a plan for economic and political devolution to English towns, and groups of councils banding together. He does not advocate a new tier of government or elected mayors for all areas but believes local authorities' excuses for not working closely with neighbouring councils should no longer be tolerated.

Brown would close the gap between regions by ensuring fair distribution of central government funds. He is right: the current system of councils bidding for money allows the centre to indulge in the pork barrel politics we have seen in the Tories' drive to "level up".

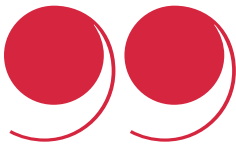
Keir Starmer has a dilemma about whether to adopt Brown's blueprint in full. Its publication, originally due on 1 September, was postponed in the hope he would be able to do so. But some Starmer advisers think there are few votes in talking about dry constitutional matters during an economic crisis.

However, there are strong reasons why Starmer should embrace the Brown plan. Labour does not yet have a convincing strategy

for securing economic growth at a time when Truss has made a return to 2.5 per cent growth her key economic goal.

Strangely, Truss has left herself open to attack by apparently dropping Boris Johnson's levelling up mantra. Of course, she will want to do things differently, but there is a danger of sending the wrong signal to the red-wall constituencies wooed by Johnson in 2019, and giving the impression she is more concerned about the Tories' traditional blue wall in the south. Some Tory MPs in the north privately fear Truss will not make the same political or financial commitment to levelling up as Johnson did.

Her commitment to Thatcherite trickle-down economics and her tax cuts that will hand most to the better off will not bridge the divide between London and the different world of the poorest regions. Brown's plan would, giving Labour some useful electoral ammunition. Starmer should offer the country more than a slightly nicer version of the status quo and live up to his own billing of the Brown review as "the boldest project Labour has embarked on for a generation".



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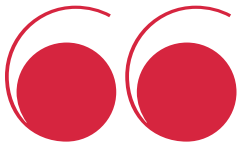
A torrent of racist abuse has been unleashed this week



A person's legacy means different things to different people: Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip attend a state dinner with the emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie in 1965 (AFP/Getty)

NADINE WHITE

RACE CORRESPONDENT



News of the Queen's passing has been met with mixed emotions in some parts of the country, particularly among Black communities, and within countries once colonised by Britain. These feelings range from indifference to celebration.

If you're surprised by that, you shouldn't be: the late ruler had many subjects – it stands to reason that views on her legacy will vary in light of the atrocities of the British empire and colonial crimes committed in the royal family's name. I sympathise with the new King for his loss of a parent; I have experienced it myself. But if some naturally refuse to mourn, I believe that is their fundamental right.

Only, it's not quite that simple. Between the wall-to-wall media coverage, the closure of essential food banks, cancellation of people's hospital appointments, postponement of funerals scheduled for Monday and photographs of the Queen splashed across billboards, we are being constantly reminded that the nation is in mourning. Unfortunately, for Black and Asian people, during times of national crisis, the racists come out in full force too. History will tell you this.

The online vitriol and racist abuse that I've witnessed and experienced over these past few days has been unlike anything I've ever seen before. Several accounts have complained about me to *The Independent* for reporting on the many mixed reactions to the Queen's death. I've been told to "go home" and received threats to my safety.

And I'm not alone: numerous other Black and Asian journalists – whose job is to highlight truth and place legacies into full context – have had similar experiences. Some have spoken openly about the sheer scale of the abuse they've received or witnessed since the Queen's passing. This, to my mind, speaks volumes about the country we live in.



Queen Elizabeth II greets Lenny Henry at London's Royal Academy of Arts in 2016 (WPA/Getty)

Ash Sarkar, contributing editor at Novara Media, said: “Since the Queen died, racist abuse on here has been literally incessant (mostly of the ‘go back’ variety, but also explicit slurs). And it’s not just me. Despite all the scolding of the left for not being mournful enough, few journalists seem at all troubled by this.”

Other journalists and public figures – from Natalie Morris, a columnist at *Metro*, to British-Nigerian lawyer, political and women’s rights activist Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu – have attested to the onslaught. Former England footballer Trevor Sinclair was racially abused by online users and suspended from talkSPORT, where he works, after tweeting a question about the Queen’s death in the context of racism in Britain.

Upon learning of the Queen’s declining health on Thursday, Uju Anya, professor at Carnegie Mellon University in the US, tweeted: “I heard the chief monarch of a thieving raping genocidal empire is finally dying. May her pain be excruciating. If anyone expects me to express anything but disdain for the monarch who supervised a government that sponsored the genocide that massacred and displaced half my family and the consequences of which those alive today are still trying to overcome, you can keep wishing upon a star.”

The academic faced racist and misogynistic backlash, such as being called the n-word and being deemed genetically inferior, plus complaints to her employer – with even billionaire businessman Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon, calling for a pile-on against her. Australian politician Mehreen Faruqi was told to “pack your bags and piss off back to Pakistan” by right-wing Australian senator Pauline Hanson, after tweeting that she “cannot mourn the leader of a racist empire”.

Writers Tirhakah Love, Harvard Professor Maya Jasanoff and Jemele Hill – all people of colour – were attacked online and smeared because of what they said about the monarch’s demise. It seems to me that Black people who have refused to bend over backwards and squeeze into this twisted, uniform approach to the death of the Queen have been disproportionately targeted compared to their white counterparts.

Death awaits every person and, with that, their legacy will come under scrutiny. A person’s legacy means different things to different people. But honest assessment can help to foster growth and reconciliation for those left behind. Elizabeth II’s passing marks the end of an era – but it is impossible to separate the Queen’s legacy from that of the institution of which she was a part.

The Queen herself – as personable and smiley as she seemed – was no passive bystander to contemporary injustices. Her reign was incontrovertibly fraught with the suffering of Black and brown people



For example, despite centuries of pleading, Britain has never paid reparations for transatlantic slavery which saw at least 12 million African people – some of whom were my ancestors – abducted from the continent, trafficked and enslaved. Instead, the government and royal family compensated former slave

owners for “lost property” — equivalent to £300bn today, which British taxpayers finished paying off in 2015.

And the Queen herself – as personable and smiley as she seemed – was no passive bystander to contemporary injustices. Her reign was incontrovertibly fraught with the suffering of Black and brown people, who have yet to receive reparations. Many of us – particularly Black and brown people who are descended from colonial subjects – have the capacity to bear layers of complex truths in a way that our privileged counterparts cannot.

For example, it is possible to empathise with the Windsors over the personal loss of their matriarch – on a human level – without crying in the streets over the role holder *or* the institution. Yet we, the “other”, are being ordered to “show respect” – as if speaking our truth is dishonourable. To my mind, there is, in fact, no greater honour than speaking truth to power.

We shouldn’t have to deal with racist abuse for being honest. The fact that we are speaks volumes about this country – and society as a whole, given that the same thing is happening overseas. It seems to me that the establishment that has worked hard to ignore these realities is now being confronted with the truth, as an unprecedented groundswell of global truth-telling gathers pace – and nothing can be done to quieten those voices.

A new day is dawning.



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This 'national mourning' is disrespecting those in need



We could have surely held the funeral on Sunday instead (AP)

NADEINE ASBALI



Sometimes it feels like Britain is a parody of itself. Almost too ironic, too ridiculous to quite be real, like we're all stuck inside some particularly grey version of *The Matrix* where the aim is to restore us back to Victorian levels of suffering and misery. It has certainly felt this way since the Queen passed away last week.

Of course, the death of a head of state, particularly one who served for seven decades, is always going to induce an outpouring of grief. Whether or not you are a fan of the concept of monarchy, the Queen was a constant in British life throughout most of our living memories.

For those who are fans of the sort of leadership that is unelected and very much elite, this is going to be a particularly sorrowful time – perhaps a time to wear black, to lay some flowers or say a prayer. I expected the back-to-back coverage on all major television channels, the documentaries about her life and the live-stream of Buckingham Palace – after all, we saw the same after the death of Prince Philip last year.

What I didn't expect was for mourning to become a sort of pervasive catch-all excuse that obscures our economic and political realities and infiltrates all aspects of our lives, to the detriment of the poorest and most disadvantaged.

In the name of national mourning, things have become a little odd and, frankly, preposterous. A few days ago, it emerged that the volume on checkout beeps had been turned down in Morrisons stores as a sign of respect for the Queen – and that customers were struggling to scan their shopping as a result. In Norwich, a cyclist posted a photo to Twitter showing that a city centre bike rack had been closed for two weeks of national mourning – and that any bikes attached to it would be removed.

Random and innocuous events like children's football tournaments and duck races with little discernible link to the royal family were cancelled up and down the country and brands capitalised on the national grief by introducing peculiar initiatives out of respect for the Queen. The Met Office even cut back on its announcements – as though the weather too had paused for national mourning.

But things haven't just been bizarre in the past week. They've now reached the point of becoming genuinely troubling, with downright dangerous and long-lasting consequences for those already struggling up and down the country.

First are the grave implications on our democratic right to hold those in power to account. Petitions on the government website have been suspended, limiting the public's ability to use their voices to enact change. Following the horrific killing of an unarmed Black man, Chris Kaba, at the hands of a police officer, the new Met Police commissioner refused to face media scrutiny due to national mourning. How convenient.

The brunt of these dangerous and insulting decisions will be felt most by those who are already experiencing the harsh reality of life during a cost of living crisis



And in a further dystopian twist, citizens exercising their democratic right to protest have been arrested or harassed by authorities for crimes constituting nothing more than holding a sign saying “Not my King” or calling Prince Andrew a “sick old man”. Under the catch-all excuses of respect and decorum, even lukewarm anti-monarchy sentiments are no longer acceptable in this nation of hollow platitudes, it seems.

Having said all this, I could abide silent supermarkets and cancelled sports events – even the shady timing of the government's recess could be excused given the Conservatives' track record of offering little support to those who most need it anyway – but what justifiable reason is there to cancel medical appointments on the day of the Queen's funeral?

Yes, it's because it's a bank holiday that these vital services are shutting down, but it feels nigh-on impossible to justify closing food banks, cancelling children's cardiology appointments or delaying MRI results.

Why is it that other grieving families whose funerals were planned for Monday need to reschedule laying their loved ones to rest, simply because the Queen happened to pass away at a

similar time? Even those who deeply mourn the loss of the Queen can surely see the hypocrisy and irony of the situation. We could have surely held the funeral on Sunday instead – and planned a bank holiday of remembrance at a later date.

As is often the case, the brunt of these dangerous and insulting decisions will be felt most by those who are already experiencing the harsh reality of life during a cost of living crisis. The thing is, poverty doesn't take a bank holiday. Not even for the Queen's death.

As mourners pile up marmalade sandwiches outside a palace filled with gold and jewels, families struggling to feed their children will wonder how to cope when their local food bank is closed in the name of national mourning. Those who have already faced increased waits for hospital appointments will now have potentially critical medical care pushed back. with potentially life-threatening consequences – especially for those with disabilities and chronic conditions.

And for the particularly sour cherry on the already inedible, stomach-turning cake that has become our nation, it is estimated that millions will be spent on the Queen's funeral – at a time when markers of child poverty have risen by as much as 14 per cent in some parts of the country in the last 18 months, and households across Britain face energy bills that will plunge them into debt and destitution.

The passing of a soul is a sad thing, but this death of a billionaire monarch steeped in inherited privilege will be felt most by the communities already facing manifold disadvantages, and I would hope that the sheer irony of that is enough to turn the stomachs of even the most ardent royalists.



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The weirdness of witnessing history in all its pomp(osity)



One may have been forgiven for mistaking the whole thing for a bunch of middle-aged men cosplaying a (eye-wateringly expensive) medieval re-enactment scene (AFP/Getty)

COLIN DRURY



On Saturday morning – perhaps because I drew a short straw – I had to go and witness history. I was the *Independent* reporter dispatched to St James's Palace to hear the proclamation of Charles III.

For three or four hours, we stood – thousands of us – in Friary Court waiting for a man titled the “Garter King of Arms” (or Dave to his friends) to walk out onto the balcony and confirm the new King was indeed the new King. When he did so, heralded by the sounding of state trumpeters, it was all done in 10 minutes, no more.

He read out his proclamation, called for three cheers from the bearskin-hatted guard below, and then he was pretty much gone. “Was that it?” I heard a child asking, and I confess I wondered the same. Epoch-defining events can be a rum do and, as the first Charles may have attested, not always entirely enjoyable.

As a journalist, they are a mixed bag. On the one hand, there you are in, the cauldron of the era, a privileged spectator to moments that will be whispered about for generations to come, an onlooker, or – dare I be so bold? – a chronicler of the age. If you’re especially lucky, you might even see Clive Myrie.

On the other hand: gosh, the crowds and the standing about! The parallels may be limited but, when I’m asked about being at such places, I often think of the actor asked about life in the trenches of the First World War: “Oh, the people! And oh, the noise!”

The last few days have, by any measure, been especially surreal: all pomp and pageantry and the demand that, after 70 years, God should pivot to saving the King.

**And, yet, more of this Liliputian liturgy still to come:
almost a week in but almost a week left**



On Saturday, in particular, I found myself thinking it a good job that we, the British public, had been plenty told in advance that all the trumpets and the tabards and the Ruritanian ritual were a key pillar of our constitutional security; otherwise, one may have

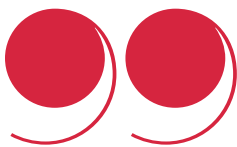
been forgiven for mistaking the whole thing for a bunch of middle-aged men cosplaying some sort of (eye-wateringly expensive) medieval re-enactment scene.

One may – if one was especially uneducated – have begun to wonder if it wasn't all a little... unnecessary? I mean, it's just one man gaining a promotion. It probably doesn't need a horn section to announce it.

In my mind-wandering fancy, I half wondered what would happen if my own father – roughly the same age as the new King – announced a new job in the same style in the Yorkshire village where he lives. Him getting up onto the steps of the White Hart and, decked out in red and gold, declaring that he would, on this 10th day of September in the year of our Lord 2022, be putting in a few shifts at the local greengrocers, so sound the trumpets and God save him.

I wondered how that would go down. I wondered how people would feel when they found out that they – not him – were paying for the lads to blow their instruments. And, yet, more of this Liliputian liturgy still to come: almost a week in but almost a week left. A five-mile queue to see a coffin. A funeral that will pretty much paralyse a city of 8 million. Center Parcs shutting down? You what? In this economy?

I ponder it all and I think again of that child in Friary Court, asking: was that it? How it reminded me of the words of another kid in another crowd: but the emperor's not wearing any clothes.



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Republicans are revealing their true colours on abortion

As the midterms loom, Lindsey Graham has made himself and his allies look hypocritical indeed, says **Holly Baxter**



The Republican senator was met with protests on Tuesday (AFP/Getty)



Everybody knows – or at least suspects – how Republicans feel about abortion rights. Though they talk about “loving them both” (a common right-wing phrase about supposedly embracing both the

pregnant women and the fetus at the same time) and about small government, most liberals and progressives know that those who oppose abortion usually do so because they want to control women's bodies. At its core, it is a hardline evangelical belief based on conservative gender roles – which makes it somewhat ironic that Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said “we’re not going to be like Iran” when he talked about restricting abortion limits. (In Graham’s telling, Iran is an abortion-on-demand state replete with terminations. Anyone with a passing knowledge of geopolitics knows this isn’t true.)

But most Republicans didn’t expect the outcry when *Roe v Wade* was overturned by the Supreme Court. Though the party has been leaning further and further right over the past decade, everyday Americans have not – even if a handful of them are radical. Most Americans support some form of access to abortion. And when the very Republican state of Kansas had a vote on whether to ban abortion in the state, many members of the GOP were surprised. Kansans roundly rejected the proposal, pointing to a distaste at the idea of abortion restrictions among the core Republican electorate. Many Americans, after all, vote Republican not because they believe in evangelical or right-wing ideological policies, but because they are essentially libertarian. Restricting a person’s right to do what they want with their body just doesn’t chime with those kinds of voters.

Some Republican hardliners, however, have not been dissuaded. Graham this week announced he was planning to introduce a bill to Congress which would ban abortion nationally after 15 weeks except in cases of rape, incest or imminent danger to the mother’s life. The fallout was immediate. Protests exploded across the country. Republicans themselves couldn’t distance themselves fast enough; even Trump sycophant Mitch McConnell said that he and most of his party members preferred it remained a case of “states deciding”.

Graham did not want to see Roe overturned because of some noble pursuit of more democratic rule. He clearly wants to see women's rights restricted across the country



“States’ rights” has been the cry from the GOP ever since *Roe v Wade* was overturned. The party of small governance and Constitutional originalism claims that it just wants most decisions handed back to the individual states. After the Supreme Court’s decision, Graham – and a number of his compatriots – said he was glad abortion was now subject to state-level legislation, and added that the same should be done with gay marriage (many feared the same could be done with interracial marriage, too.) Republicans kept singing from that playbook for a long time: states’ rights, states’ rights, states’ rights. It’s all about giving the people more rights, not taking them away – promise!

Now, however, Graham has shown his hand. He did not want to see *Roe* overturned because of some noble pursuit of more democratic rule. He clearly wants to see women’s rights restricted across the country, whether or not American citizens agree.

In doing so, Graham has made the playbook look very suspect and Republicans look very dishonest. This is the last thing McConnell or any swing-state Republican wants as we approach the November midterms.

In the states I have travelled to while reporting on abortion rights – Alabama, Oklahoma, Texas – I found that most people said they “don’t support abortion” but equally wouldn’t want that right “taken away”. Though I’ve seen my fair share of “PRAY TO END ABORTION” placards balanced on southern doorsteps, the people I spoke to – even the people with rosaries

hanging from their rearview mirrors and people who were raised in small, conservative towns – thought abortion was largely a private matter.

American conservatives often say they believe sex education shouldn't be taught in schools because it's a private matter best left to families. They wax lyrical about the need to keep family planning discreet. It's hard to argue you're just supporting individual freedoms and privacy when you're legislating for federal bans. Some might say it makes you look like a gigantic hypocrite.

Yours,

Holly Baxter

US Voices editor



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A crackdown on protest could benefit republicans



Perhaps people who object to protests in a time of national mourning would be better off adopting a position of aloof disdain and ignoring the signs and comments which do not fit in with their own views. It strikes me that such a non-reaction would be more quintessentially British than arresting those who protest, which is much more in keeping with a totalitarian state.

The MPs who voted through the flawed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act are responsible for the heavy-handed tactics of police (although these were, after the event, reined in by the Met). These led to considerable attention being given to the protests, and therefore more weight to the anti-monarchy message they proclaimed.

It is not beyond the realm of possibility that these actions could hasten the end of the monarchy, since heavy-handed responses often provoke a correspondingly greater backlash than retaining the status quo. Perhaps the new cabinet should take note.

Katharine Powell *Neston, Cheshire*

The secret sauce?

The thing that strikes me about the attack on “Treasury orthodoxy” and sacking critical voices and not seeking independent advice, in case that too is critical, is the assumption that the country has suffered collective amnesia. Because we

have been here before (Kwarteng ‘orthodoxy’ purge in Treasury is an odd tactic, News, yesterday).

Austerity was an attack on economic orthodoxy; making cutting the deficit the be-all and end-all was an attack on the economic consensus that this was a mad thing to do coming out of a recession. And, of course, this also included slashing corporation tax by 35 per cent, while cutting public spending by eye-watering amounts.

As this didn’t lead the UK to grow faster than comparable economies, in fact, the opposite, you would imagine this would have given the tax-cutting zealots pause for thought. But if you take being voted in by around a third of your own colleagues, and less than half of the tiny, unrepresentative selection of the population who are members of the Tory party, as a mandate to stuff your cabinet with chums, cronies and ideological soulmates, then pausing for thought is probably not high on your agenda.

So although the tax-cutting, lower-public-spending mantra of austerity arguably caused the current crises in health, social care, policing, the justice system, etc, I guess failing better will be the lesson we’ll have taken from “Trussonomics” when history is written.

Maybe I’m wrong, and telling the Treasury to make the economy grow by 2.5 per cent, telling the police to cut crime by 20 per cent and telling the Home Office to stop all boat crossing will prove an effective strategy in itself.

Maybe tax cuts will somehow prove the secret sauce without investment, productivity or wages for ordinary workers improving as with Osborne’s cuts, and we’ll head seamlessly to the promised sunlit uplands.

John Murray *Bracknell, Berkshire*

Truss and the King on tour

What a wonderful photo opportunity for her to appear in a wide variety of black frocks to accompany that supercilious look Liz Truss wears so well. Has she managed to solve the crisis crippling our nation's economy in less than a week? Otherwise, why is she able to desert her post and be seen trailing the royals as our representative?

Diane Stone *East Sussex*

Royal liberation

Andrew Buncombe details the many ways the members of the royal family are constrained by their roles (If monarchists are so certain of their case, let's vote on it, Voices, yesterday). It has long been my belief that were the royals animals, there would be a militant society dedicated to their liberation

Joanna Pallister *Durham City*

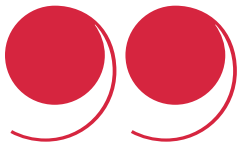
Now is the time to aid Ukraine

Now is the time for the West to go all in and supply whatever Ukraine needs to drive Putin's military out of their country. If Ukraine can defeat Putin's forces in Kherson to anything like their spectacle around Kharkiv and Izium, then Putin's defeat looks likely.

And in 1905, 1917 and the early 1990s, military defeat led to regime change in Russia. Before General Winter comes to Putin's aid and fixes the front lines, we should be doing everything to help the Ukrainians. We must act decisively and quickly.

But we should also plan for how we will respond if Putin resorts to weapons of mass destruction or release of radiation from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. And for the possibility either of regime change in Russia or Putin ordering a general mobilisation (despite the risks to his popularity).

Ian Henderson *Norwich*



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Section 2/ The Big Read

Uncomfortable bedfellows

Turkey's president emerged from a meeting in Russia with closer Kremlin ties and fresh rhetoric on the Assad regime. Is a reconciliation on the cards, asks **Borzou Daragahi**



Bashar al-Assad and Recep Tayyip Erdogan may need each other again (AFP/Getty)

Much of the rest of the world was zeroed in on the war in Ukraine. But when President Recep Tayyip Erdogan flew to meet President Vladimir Putin in the Russian Black Sea resort city of Sochi last month, he had one top item on his agenda:

getting his host to greenlight his military plans against Kurdish fighters in northern Syria.

Few know what the two men spoke about on 5 August during nearly four hours of closed-door meetings inside the walls and upon the lush green grounds of the Bocharov Ruchey palace, the 1950s summer residence built for the leadership of the Soviet Union. But as often happens after long meetings between Putin and other world leaders, Erdogan emerged from the meeting a changed man.

After more than 11 years of openly agitating against the regime of Bashar al-Assad and backing his armed opponents, he began spouting a starkly different message on Syria, calling for reconciliation and dialogue with the Damascus leadership.

“The opposition and the regime in Syria need to reconcile,” Erdogan told reporters some days later during a separate trip abroad. “Turkey’s goal in Syria is not to defeat Assad but to find a political solution, and calling for “political dialogue or diplomacy” with the Damascus regime.

For many, the new approach was a shock. Turkey has been the main backer of the Syrian factions that have fought a desperate decade-long war against the Damascus regime and has clashed militarily numerous times with Assad’s forces.

Erdogan turned against Assad after he launched a violent military campaign to crush both peaceful and armed opponents who rose up against the Russian- and Iranian-backed Damascus dictatorship in 2011. Now there are whispers that Erdogan and Assad could meet on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit this week in Uzbekistan.

It has happened before. Turkey in recent months has launched a reboot of its foreign policy, and made amends with numerous former enemies. But Syria may be different. Facts on the ground complicate any quick rapprochement between Turkey and Syria, and a previously unthinkable photo op like the ones between Erdogan and Saudi heir to the throne, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, seems unlikely.

“I don’t expect any kind of reconciliation and I don’t expect normalisation,” says Omer Ozkizilcik, of the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, a government-affiliated Turkish think tank.



Military vehicles are pictured during a joint Russian-Turkish patrol near the border with Turkey (AFP/Getty)

“A picture of Erdogan and Assad together is impossible. That said, it will not mean that Turkey will not make statements and try to call for the normalisation of relations, But I don’t expect diplomatic ties. It would be too abrupt.”

Though Syria’s war has simmered down, the dangers of the conflict persist. Yesterday, the United Nations warned that Syria’s bloody conflict is at risk of escalation after several frontlines across the country flared up in recent months. “Syria cannot afford a return to larger-scale fighting, but that is where it may be heading,” said Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, chair of the UN’s Syria commission.

The UN claimed there had been an increase in “grave violations of fundamental human rights” over the past six months, including fighting in the country’s northeast and northwest that left dozens of civilians dead and restricted access to food and water. UN agencies have also warned of a cholera outbreak in Syria that could spread, calling for urgent action.

The UN also documented more Russian aerial bombardments over opposition-held areas. “We had an idea at some point that

the war was completely finished in Syria,” Pinheiro said, but adding the violations proved this was not the case.

‘No to reconciliation’

Reconciliation between Damascus and Ankara would carry broad implications for the West and the Middle East. It would potentially draw Nato ally Turkey even closer into Moscow’s orbit. It could complicate the continued presence of US military personnel in northern and eastern Syria. It would add to the woes of millions of Syrians opposed to the Assad regime and forced into exile.

Turkey’s shift prompted outrage among Ankara’s Syrian clients, who control much of northwest Syria. Protesters burned Turkish flags after Turkish foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, admitted he had met in 2021 with his Syrian regime counterpart, Firas Mikdad, on the sidelines of a conference in Belgrade.

“No to reconciliation,” they chanted. “Revolutionaries can never be wiped out.”

The main obstacle to any kind of reconciliation is de facto Turkish control over parts of Syria. Over Damascus’s vehement objections, Turkey effectively maintains its own protectorate over several regions of the north of the country and retains strong influence over Idlib province, which is ruled by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a well-armed opposition group with roots in Al Qaeda.

“Ankara is quite clearly lofting trial balloons for how it sees a potential rapprochement with Damascus,” says Aaron Stein, of the Foreign Policy Research Initiative. “Turkey essentially owns northern Syria, and so we can ruminate all we want, but the actual mechanics of turning back over to Damascus territory Ankara controls and subsidizes will be extremely difficult.”

Turkey’s modified stance toward the Damascus regime could be a ruse meant to win Ankara the Kremlin’s green light to pulverise the Kurds who have taken control of northeast Syria. Turkey views the Kurdish self-rule experiment, led by pro-PKK Kurds as a graver security threat than the regime in Damascus.



A girl stands at a camp for Syrians displaced by conflict near the northern city of Raqa (AFP/Getty)

“Russia keeps telling Turkey it needs to solve its Kurdish problem via Damascus,” says Ozkizilcik. “Turkey tried to reach out, and the first statement from Damascus was that they consider Turkey the main sponsor of terrorism and expect it first to withdraw from Syria.”

Above all, Erdogan’s shift is rooted in domestic political calculations ahead of the 2023 presidential elections, in which AKP opponents are making migration a key issue. Turks are fed up with millions of Syrian and other refugees settling in the country, and Erdogan’s government has been blamed for letting this happen. The president is seeking to blunt the opposition’s criticisms of his migration by essentially co-opting their proposals to reconcile with Assad.

“The government was seen as favouring the Syrians to be in the country,” says Dilek Gursel, an independent foreign policy analyst specialising in Turkey and the Middle East. “This is in preparation for elections next year by openly saying the same thing as the opposition.”

Anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism may also help Erdogan domestically in a nation that feels betrayed by Washington for its support of Syrian Kurdish rebels and by Europe for its rejection of its application to join the European Union more than a decade ago.

“The US will suffer the consequences of pushing Turkey when it is left alone with a crippled Nato,” the columnist Hakki Ocal wrote in the pro-government *Milliyet* newspaper on 12 September. “It is not Greece, Ukraine, or the PKK/YPG terrorists they have been training in Syria that have provided Nato with its current status as a strong organisation. Nato is strong only with a fully-equipped Turkey.”

Turkey has stunned its longtime allies in recent years by boosting ties with erstwhile rivals such as Iran, Israel, and Russia while alienating fellow Nato members such as the United States and France.

In recent days, Turkey has turned up the heat on Greece, a longtime rival, while making amends with Armenia, with which it has had a tricky past. Many are flummoxed by Turkey’s recent moves. Some speculate that Erdogan is cycling through various foreign policy gambles in an effort to gain some victories ahead of 2023. “It’s Erdogan and a bunch of dudes,” says Sinan Ciddi, a professor specialising in Turkey at the Marine Corps University in Virginia. “And they literally make it up as they go along.”

Even some of the players and pundits closest to the presidential palace in Ankara have little notion of what Erdogan is thinking and what was discussed during his meeting in Sochi with Putin. There has been tantalising speculation.

Among those who attended the summit was Ramzan Kadyrov, the Kremlin’s controversial enforcer in Chechnya, and the likely culprit behind a 2021 plot to assassinate a high-ranking Chechen opposition figure sheltering in Turkey. Perhaps the summit was meant to rid the Ankara-Moscow relations of lingering problems and forge a broader partnership.

During the meeting, Ankara and Moscow committed to trading in local currencies, potentially hampering Western efforts to isolate Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. Analysts also speculated that Russia had shifted up to \$10bn (£8.5bn) in cash to Turkey’s Central Bank reserves ahead of the Sochi meeting.



Turkish-backed Syrian fighters prepare to load a long-range rocket to be fired (AFP/Getty)

And there are other expanding areas of cooperation. Turkey hopes to revive its economy with cheap Russian energy. And Turkish exports to Russia have reached a record \$738m.

“Turkey-Russia ties have grown in many areas, from nuclear energy to tourism,” Russian senator Andreyi Klimov told *Sputnik* during a visit to Turkey. “Our states established unique political relations. Our leaders discuss very important topics in their meetings and solve them.”

Russia’s consulate to Istanbul recently hosted a three-day business conference. “Western companies’ removal from the Russian market following the sanctions caused a vacuum,” the head of the Russia-Turkey Business Council, Izzet Ekmekcibasi, reportedly said. “We bring Turkish firms to fill in that vacuum.”

A month after Sochi, Erdogan was spouting Kremlin talking points. “I can clearly say that I do not find the attitude of the west towards Russia right. Because there is a west that follows a policy based on provocation,” he said, according to Turkey’s state news agency. “I say to those who underestimate Russia, you are doing it wrong. Russia is not a country that can be underestimated.”

While Erdogan could be playing Putin into greenlighting a Syria operation – and as a way to boost the Turkish economy – the Kremlin could also be seducing Turkey closer into its orbit. “Putin probably considers Erdogan to be one of the

leaders against whom he is in the strongest position and someone he could pressure,” wrote Osman Sert, in the opposition paper *Karar*.

Ciddi suggested that Erdogan was acting out of desperation, turning to Putin on Syria and to revamp his economy because he has been spurned by other western allies, who sharply disagree with him on the threat posed by Syrian Kurds as well as a number of other major issues.

“He had nowhere else to turn,” says Ciddi. “Erdogan essentially can’t get what he wants without sitting down face to face and mending ties. He has no choice but to recognise Assad as the legitimate ruler of the country and hopefully work with him to achieve his goals. He has no choice. Still, a lot of people are left wondering and angry.”

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Section 2/ Ask Simon Calder

Is my passport still valid for a November trip to Turkey?



Turkey requires at least six months left on travel documents (iStock)

Q I am looking to go on holiday to Turkey for a week from 6 November 2022. My passport was issued on 8 April 2013 and expires on 8 July 2023. I am unclear if this will be OK, and what the six-month rule relates to.

Hannah R

A Your passport is valid until the day it expires, but Turkey asks you to have at least six months left on the day you arrive. So you can enter Turkey any time you like up to 8 January 2023. The

Foreign Office travel advice for Turkey adds: “There should be a full blank page for the entry and exit stamps.”

What concerns me, though, is that you are one of many travellers still understandably confused and worried by some inexplicable misrepresentations of the rules for British passports.

From the start of 2021, the UK asked for its citizens to be subject to more stringent rules for journeys to the European Union (and wider Schengen Area) as part of the Brexit agreement. The request to be treated as “third-country nationals” has triggered two tests for British passports used to enter the EU: Is the document under 10 years old on the day of departure and is there at least three months remaining on the intended day of return? (In case it helps, this means you can enter the EU up to 7 April 2023 for a stay of up to 90 days.)

But the 2021 rule change has no effect on travel to Turkey or any other country. Sadly some travel enterprises and media have spread unnecessary alarm. They have suggested, without a shred of evidence, that somehow all British passports expire after 10 years. Some go even further and claim they are useless after nine years and six months. I shall continue to chase up travel firms that misrepresent the rules to the detriment of their customers – and, more widely, those organisations that lazily insist that a passport have at least six months of life left for any international travel. That, too, is nonsense: some nations, like Turkey, ask for six months; most do not.

Email your question to s@hols.tv or tweet [@simoncalder](https://twitter.com/simoncalder)

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Section 2



ON THIS DAY



Agatha Christie was born on this day in 1890 (Getty)

1649: English Anglican priest Titus Oates, fabricator of the “Popish Plot” in 1678, was born.

1830: At the official opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, Britain’s first rail fatality occurred when MP William Huskisson stepped from a train to shake hands with the Duke of Wellington – and was run over.

1859: Isambard Kingdom Brunel, probably the greatest British engineer, died. He designed the Clifton suspension bridge and many others, and also designed and built the three largest ships in the world.

1871: The Army and Navy Co-operative began the first mail-order business to meet the needs of its members in Britain and overseas.

1890: Agatha Christie, creator of Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, and writer of detective stories that sold more than 300 million copies, was born in Torquay.

1916: Tanks went into battle for the first time for the British army, in the Somme. Designed by Sir Ernest Swinton, they revolutionised battle strategy.

1935: At a Nuremberg rally, Adolf Hitler issued new decrees that relegated Jews to sub-human status and made the swastika the official German flag.

1974: Civil war broke out in Lebanon's capital, Beirut, between Christians and Muslims.

1985: Tony Jacklin's European team won the Ryder Cup from the US who had long dominated the golf competition.

On this day last year: Many victims of bank transfer scams were being "abandoned" by banks when trying to get their money back, according to Which?

Birthdays

Clive Merrison, actor, 77; **Tommy Lee Jones**, actor, 76; **Oliver Stone**, film director, 76; **Jaki Graham**, singer, 66; **Jimmy Carr**, comedian, 50; **Tom Hardy**, actor, 45

PA

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The show must go on

Olivia Petter finds out what fashion fans can expect this season, as the Queen's death casts a shadow over London Fashion Week and prompts some last-minute cancellations



Queen Elizabeth II and 'Vogue' editor Anna Wintour at Richard Quinn's runway show in 2018 (Getty)

It's a strange time to be thinking about clothes. And yet, that is what many of us will be doing this weekend. Because in an unprecedented state of affairs, this year's London Fashion Week comes just eight days after the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Given the official 10-day mourning period that traditionally comes after the death of a monarch, many expected the proceedings to be cancelled altogether. However, official guidance issued by the government suggested that “there is no obligation to cancel or postpone events and sporting fixtures, or close entertainment venues during the national mourning period”. Doing so would be at the discretion of individual organisations. The guidance added that “as a mark of respect, organisations might wish to consider cancelling or postponing events or closing venues on the day of the State Funeral”.

The Queen’s funeral has been planned for Monday 19 September, clashing with what would have been the penultimate day of LFW and some of the week’s biggest shows, such as Roksanda and Christopher Kane. They have all been cancelled or rescheduled.

It’s unclear what all of this means for the rest of London Fashion Week. From a business perspective, the timing couldn’t be worse. In 2020, the British Fashion Council released a statement calling on the government for industry support, with data from Oxford Economics predicting 240,000 job losses in the wake of Covid, resulting in revenues dropping from £118bn to £88bn. Emerging brands bore the brunt of it in terms of major losses, though established names weren’t immune: Burberry’s retail sales fell 48.4 per cent during 2020.

After two years of turmoil caused by the pandemic, the fashion industry was finally ready to make its big comeback. Burberry, Raf Simons and JW Anderson all made triumphant returns to headline the schedule, causing a flurry of excitement among the fashion pack, who have spent the past few seasons adapting to schedules comprising fewer shows and far less pageantry than normal. Think smaller venues, lower budgets, and nowhere near the typical number of A-list attendees.

Last Friday, the British Fashion Council issued a statement announcing that the biannual event would continue despite the national mourning period, adding that they recognise the event’s importance for businesses and as a designer showcase. “Therefore, shows and presentations of collections can

continue,” it declared, “but we are asking that designers respect the mood of the nation and period of national mourning by considering the timing of their image release.”



Cancelling would have had a devastating impact as we had already invested so heavily in it and would not have been able to recoup those losses



Shortly after the statement was released, though, Burberry and Raf Simons announced their decision to cancel their shows as a mark of respect to the Queen. For smaller brands, who have spent the last six months preparing their spring/summer 2023 collections, this choice was not quite so simple. Hence why many of them, including Molly Goddard, Rejina Pyo, and SS Daley, have chosen to respectfully go ahead.

“I think the mood this season will have been influenced by recent events and this will be very present at shows,” says designer Daniel W Fletcher, who will debut his new collection this evening. “There was a real excitement for LFW this season that I hope has not been lost. I think it’s important for brands and designers to be respectful, but also to remember that fashion shows are an important part of a brand’s calendar for sales and press.”

Fletcher adds that for his brand, which offers contemporary unisex clothing that has been worn by the likes of Harry Styles and Sam Smith, cancelling was simply not an option. “It would have had a devastating impact as we had already invested so heavily in it and would not have been able to recoup those

losses,” he explains. “We will have a tribute at the start of our show [to the Queen] which I hope our guests will join us in.”



Lil Nas X sports a Harris Reed creation at the MTV VMAs in August (Getty)

A similar sentiment was expressed by Harris Reed, whose gender-fluid label has been seen on Adele and Beyoncé. On Sunday, the designer issued a statement on Instagram explaining his decision to continue with his spring/summer 2023 show this season, writing that his fellow young designers “have put their entire brand budgets into their shows to bring in sales and brand awareness with the outcome being they are hopefully able to grow and not go under or have to restructure”.

Reed tells me that emphasis at this time should be on the sense of community that LFW offers. “It’s so important that we have this moment of artistic expression,” he says. “We’re all small businesses and we put our hard-earned money into these shows. So it’s crucial that, when big shows are pulling out, us young designers stick together and make a statement with our clothing. We’re here, we’re together and we’re supporting the British economy in that way.”

Reed explains that “thousands and thousands” of hours have gone into preparing his upcoming show, alongside “six-figure” financial investments. “Cancelling would have completely halted the progression of the brand as it stands,” he adds. “We would be in a very difficult position had we not been able to show this season.”

There will inevitably be those who criticise the fashion world for forging ahead at such a sensitive time. But, as designers have pointed out, such criticisms are likely to be rooted in a common *Devil Wears Prada*-fuelled misconception around LFW. That it’s gratuitous. Just for fun. Superficial.

“Even though LFW could be entertaining and fun to the outside world, it’s a serious business event which is part of the official fashion calendar,” says Bora Aksu, who will be showing his spring/summer 2023 collection tomorrow afternoon. “There is so much hard work that goes into creating seasonal collections and I believe carrying on [and] showing our work will only help maintain the reputation of London being one of the major fashion capitals. I’m sure the Queen would have agreed and supported that.”



A model presents a design from Bora Aksu’s Spring/Summer 2022 collection at last year’s LFW (Getty)

Of course, the Queen famously made an appearance at LFW herself. In 2018, she sat next to Anna Wintour in the front row at Richard Quinn’s show to present the designer with the inaugural Queen Elizabeth II Award for British Design. Quinn, who has since established himself as one of the annual highlights on the LFW calendar, had originally been due to present his new collection on Monday evening; his show will now take place on Tuesday.

It’s likely that many of the shows that have chosen to go ahead this season – particularly Quinn – will feature tributes to the Queen. After all, fashion is nothing if not a reflection of society, even if that society is grieving. And like all art, it has the power to send a message to the masses, offering a sense of much-needed unity where there is often division. Considering this

alongside the fact that the late monarch was a staunch supporter of the British fashion industry, perhaps it makes more sense for proceedings to continue than not.

“Thriving through difficult times was one of the late Queen’s trademarks,” says Mark Fast, who will debut his spring/summer 2023 collection tomorrow. “When it comes to business, the show must go on. As a brand, we will continue with the show to demonstrate our strength and belief in our business while simultaneously paying our respects to the Queen.”

We don’t yet know how designers this season will pay homage to Her Majesty, or other matters of national significance. Reed, though, is quick to tease his show. Sartorially speaking, fans can expect “massive silhouettes, incredibly detailed garments and louder-than-life clothes”. Additionally, there will be a secret performer “that will blow people away, acting as an emotional homage to the times that we’re in”. If this approach is reflected by Reed’s contemporaries, the result could be something truly special – and more needed than ever.

London Fashion Week begins today and runs until Tuesday

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PAGE CHURNERS

David RS Taylor puts some home printers to the test



While wireless home printers might be a normal concept now but it was only a few years ago that technology caused a huge shift in printer design.

We're sure that everyone reading this has, at some point, frantically tried to connect one to the back of the computer. All the while being worried that the ink cartridges have leaked or

the paper you short-sightedly already put in the tray is about to spill out.

No more. The wireless printer is now, understandably, wildly popular, almost consigning its poor wired relative to the dustbin. It's easier to use and much more versatile, usually with the option to print directly from tablets or smartphones alongside your desktop. Printer apps have improved dramatically too, now linking up seamlessly with Google Cloud printing and Apple AirPrint.

Buying the printer is one thing, but be aware of ink costs. Most brands insist on using their own cartridges, and prices for these can vary substantially, so be sure to factor this into any purchase.

How we tested

We tested a range of wireless printers from some of the biggest household names. We were looking for printers that were easy to set up, printed fast and were cost-effective too. Here's what we found...



Epson Ecotank Et 2710 Home Printer: £204.99, OnBuy

For a more eco-friendly approach to printing, Epson has a great range of Ecotank products that use cartridge-free ink tanks,

leading to a more efficient printing process that's not only better for the planet, but also your wallet.

Like the other Epson printers on this list, the Et 2710 is easy to set up, with the clean "Epson Connect" app doing most of the work for you. The print quality and speed is at least on par with any other printer on the list, and colour prints are especially vibrant. With no quality sacrificed for more efficient and eco-friendly ink usage, printers should be moving in this direction.

Buy now



Brother HL-L2350DW Mono Laser Home Printer: £144.99, Argos

The mono in the printer's name refers to the fact that it's a one-stop monochrome shop. If you need a printer that can rapidly whack out page after page of important black and white documents or your latest coming-of-age novel without breaking a sweat, this effort from Brother is one of the best out there.

Despite the large 250-sheet paper input, it's a handy size for most tables, or to put under your desk. It's also surprisingly quiet: Brother says that all the models within the HL range print at less than 50dB. We tested it late at night and felt more than comfortable doing so.

Buy now



Canon Selphy Square QX10 Home Printer: £149.99, Canon

This is a very fun bit of kit. Almost a modern polaroid camera, simply pick a photo from your phone via the Canon app, frame how you like, and watch your square photo print in seconds. While it looks quite pricey on the surface, it's a sophisticated machine: Canon claims that the high-quality prints will stay that way for 100 years (tested using an accelerated ageing method), so choose your photos wisely.

The portable mini-printer has a decent battery life, and feels sturdy enough to take with you on holiday. There are also options for filters and photo editing on the app for any last-minute airbrushing you need to do (don't bother, you look great).

Buy now



HP Officejet Pro 7720 A3 Home Printer: £202.98, Amazon

Don't let the "office" in its name fool you – the 7720 is a strong choice for a home wireless printer. It looks good, the HP Smart app is straightforward – the best app on the list – and print quality is high. Thanks to its wide format, the 7720 can print up to A3, with scan and copy up to legal size (slightly larger than A4).

The cartridges are quite expensive, but you do get great quality from them, and the optional high-yield cartridges let you print up to three times as many black-text and two times as many colour pages. The 7720 is also the perfect choice for professional-quality brochures and flyers at a decent price and in the comfort of your own home, producing water, smear and fade-resistant prints.

Buy now



**Epson Expression Premium XP-6100 Home Printer: £105,
Amazon**

Epson's XP-6100 proves that a good printer doesn't need to cost the earth. Another all-in-one unit, it's compact and stylish enough to fit in most settings, as a professional printer or something for the family. Once again, the app is easy to navigate, and printing, scanning and copying are straightforward.

The dual front-loading paper trays hold A4 and photo paper respectively, and there's an option for double-sided printing. There's no touchscreen, but that's no issue when you have your phone or the computer, and the buttons work well enough. It also serves to keep the cost down. All in all, a well-performing printer at a good price.

Buy now



HP OfficeJet Pro 9020 Home Printer: £349, Amazon

The 9020 is a bit of a beast and is much bigger than the other printers on this list. The printer comes with a 35-page automatic page loader for hands-free copying, two 250-sheet paper trays that fit a full ream of paper, and the ability to scan both sides of a page at once.

The HP Smart app is a winner again here, helping you quickly access the files you want from Google Drive, Dropbox, the cloud or email – scanned pages can go the other way. It's a big printer for big tasks, and the closest on this list to a proper office printer.

You can sign up to be notified once the OfficeJet Pro 9020 is back in stock.

Buy now



Canon Maxify GX7050 Home Printer: £669.88, Amazon

This pricy Maxify printer from Canon might demand a second look at the bank balance, but the Maxify line offers a higher yield of colour pages, prints faster, and produces an impressively accurate range of colours, when up against Canon's Pixma products (which are in themselves not something to be sniffed at).

The GX7050 is a refillable ink tank printer marketed to the business user, but would certainly be a useful bit of kit at home, especially for those who need professional-quality prints for their home office/kitchen table. There's a stonking 600-sheet capacity, and the refillable element adds bonus green points. It's more expensive, but in this instance, you get what you pay for.

Buy now



Epson Ecotank ET-3850 Home Printer: £359.99, Currys

For high-speed, business-quality printing at an ultra-low cost, Epson has the goods. While the ET-3850 doesn't have a touchscreen (something you might expect at this price) and is a pretty standard mid-range printer, the real advantage is the fantastic value ink. The ink that comes with the printer already has capacity to print 14,000 black and white pages (or over 5,000 colour), and any refill bottles cost – according to Epson – about 90 per cent less than traditional cartridges.

Besides the great value, this 3-in-1 does its job with minimal fuss, producing quality prints with impressive consistency. If you're looking for a new printer for a small office or busy home (coursework won't print itself), you won't go far wrong with the ET-3850. Your bank balance will thank you.

Buy now



Epson EcoTank ET-1810 Home Printer: £159.99, Epson

This is a printer that offers Epson's top-class eco credentials with an even lower initial price. Prints from the various budget-friendly EcoTank product still offer good quality, an easy set-up and a consistent wireless connection.

The price drop comes from the ET-1810 being a pure printing machine – no scan or copy capabilities here. However, for most users, this won't be a huge problem. It's a sound choice for a small household that needs a solid printer for the odd task without breaking the bank.

Buy now



HP Envy Inspire 7220e Home Printer: £109.99, HP

The Envy Inspire 7220e is a great value 3-in-1 machine that offers pretty much everything you need from a home printer for a lower price than many rivals. It performs admirably, with solid printing speeds and impressive quality prints. However, HP's secret weapon takes is its subscription service.

HP's relatively new HP+ system makes it easy to see how much ink you have left, and Instant Ink, HP's subscription model, can work out as a long-term boon to your finances (with an up to 70 per cent saving). It also means that you don't need to worry about traipsing out to a shop to find the right cartridges or refill bottles, as HP will send replacement ink directly to your door.

Buy now

The verdict

Your decision really depends on what you want from a printer. For a wireless printer that does everything you ask of it, produces high-quality mono and colour prints, saves on ink price and is better for the planet, the **Epson EcoTank ET-2710** is the best option. However, for a home office printer that prints black and white at an astounding pace, the **Brother HL-L2350DW** mono laser printer is perfect.

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‘There could be another poll tax situation with people out on the streets’

The Harry Potter and ‘Hugo’ star Frances de la Tour talks to **Jessie Thompson** about socialism and TV’s ‘Professor T’



‘I think at a certain age you just go, well, I can’t do that anymore,’ says the actor about theatre work (PA)

I'm writing a letter to Richard Curtis on behalf of Frances de la Tour. Release the director's cut of *Love Actually* – for the sake of the nation. The silken-voiced Harry Potter and Seventies sitcom star was originally among the crème de la crème British thespians starring in the 2003 film, playing Anne Reid's dying, bed-ridden partner – but both actors ended up on the cutting room floor. “Oh yes, we had a lovely scene,” she says. “And I think it was the only gay scene,” she remembers. “It's odd that they cut it. Maybe it was too dark to bring into it. Because it ended up being quite a light and fluffy film, didn't it?” It could have made the affectionately derided Christmas film into something quite different – more progressive, less cloyingly twee. But, still, Curtis has manners. “At least he wrote to me and said we're terribly sorry but it's got to be cut.”

You might argue, though, that an actor as unusual as De la Tour has no place in cheesy films where “love” gets a capital L. The 78-year-old three-time Olivier winner has an edge – an unhurried, imperial air. There was no surprise when the BBC series *Who Do You Think You Are?* found her ancestors to be aristocrats. Listen to her voice – crisp, deep, laconic – and it may seem a little incongruous to imagine her in any other profession. She began her career at the Royal Shakespeare Company in the Sixties; in recent years, she's had roles in franchise films such as *Enola Holmes* and Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*, and worked with Martin Scorsese on his big-hearted family picture *Hugo*. There have also been TV comedies *Vicious* and *Big School*, and she's been feted for the three Alan Bennett plays she's performed in. She admits she's now working less “because of my age”. I call her at home on her landline, and she's amiable – but you sense she wouldn't suffer fools, in fact anyone she took against, gladly or otherwise.

We're talking because De la Tour is reprising her role in ITV's *Professor T*, a British remake of a Belgian crime drama about a Cambridge criminologist with OCD (played here by Ben Miller). It's characterised by tonal shifts like handbrake turns: dark one minute, comically surreal the next. As his mother Adelaide, De la Tour was an immediate fan favourite, wearing fluffy hats and

giving bubble baths to her chihuahua. Their relationship – fraught, but with more tender depths – takes the show to unexpected places. “They are obviously very, very dependent on each other. I mean they’re useless, in a way, together because they’re so different,” but “there’s a deep love there.” A scene in which they danced together on a rooftop was borne out of a moment of spontaneity with the director. “There are these moments that show their closeness. And then she comes out with something ridiculous. And he comes out with something off-kilter. And they’re completely at odds with each other.”

The resurgence of quality TV drama is “welcome”, De la Tour says. “[TV] used to be frowned on years and years ago – that it could never compete with cinema. But it has done. When I was younger, it wasn’t the case.” She notes that there were some popular comedies; one happened to be *Rising Damp*, about a terrible landlord and his unfortunate tenants. De la Tour played sophisticated spinster Miss Ruth Jones, and it remains one of her best-known roles. The show ran for four series between 1974 and 1978 and had an audience of between 15 and 20 million a week. In previous interviews, she’s seemed exasperated when it comes up. Only because, she tells me now: “There’s so much work there. I’m not angry about it. It’s just annoying. Because it’s just one thing, after so many.”



As Madame Maxime in the Harry Potter series (Alamy)

A new generation has fixated on a different role: De la Tour’s performance as giantess and Hagrid squeeze Madame Maxime

in the Harry Potter films. Parents come up to her in the park and ask her to say hello to their children; she doesn't mind. "It's nice to see their little faces light up because they are children. It's nice that I can give them a smile. And they always say, 'Oh, you're not very tall, are you, in real life?' And I go, 'No, I'm not. I just played a giant, I'm not actually a giant,'" she chuckles. "And their eyes get bigger and bigger, it's very sweet."

Of course, the Harry Potter film franchise has been blighted by controversy because of JK Rowling's much-publicised comments about transgender people. Is it right that younger cast members have distanced themselves from the author? "Well, I don't know if it's right or wrong. It's their view, you know what I mean? They're perfectly entitled to their view," De la Tour says. "I just hope it hasn't hurt her work. Because she's a wonderful writer and she's produced a great volume of writing that is loved all over the world. So I think she needs support," she says. "But I think a lot of that is misunderstanding. I don't think, at all, she was against any rights of people, men or women. I didn't feel she was against anybody having the right to be what they want to be."

But it is De la Tour's respected stage work that has been the biggest passion of her career. "That's where I started. That's what I dreamt of being. That's what I trained for," she explains. "So I think that's where the source of my energy for wanting to be an actor is rooted." Many have a particular fondness for her performance as the kind but cutting teacher Mrs Lintott in *The History Boys*, which first opened at the National Theatre almost 20 years ago, went to Broadway and was later made into a film. It launched the careers of James Corden, Dominic Cooper, Russell Tovey and Samuel Barnett, and won De la Tour a Tony. "Can't believe it," she says, straight away, on mention of the play. "Because it really does feel like yesterday. Some of the work one does feels like a century ago. And then other things you think, oh, that was only a few years ago, because it's still so alive in my mind. And I think in all of the boys' – well, they were boys, young men. All those actors, they were like 21 or 22, well, now they're nearly 40!"

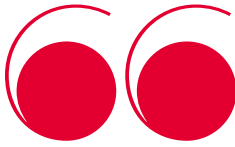


De la Tour with the film cast of 'The History Boys', including the late Richard Griffiths, Russell Tovey (far right), Dominic Cooper (front centre) and James Corden, back row, second from left (Fox Searchlight/Kobal/Shutterstock)

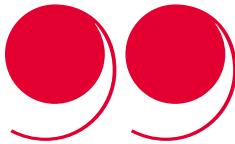
One barnstorming speech, in which Mrs Lintott spoke of “how depressing it is to teach five centuries of masculine ineptitude”, had the audience clapping every night – on Broadway in particular, where “it used to get a huge whoopla”. (Another continental difference: “We could use very firm expletives in England but on Broadway, you couldn’t as much.”) Being the only woman in the cast was “oh, rather wonderful. I felt very honoured really, and very loved. And they sent me up rotten as well, which was great. So I sent them up rotten.” In Bennett’s diaries, he described one moment of backstage back-and-forth when he saw “Russell Tovey in the wings murmuring to Ms de la Tour, ‘Frankie, if I weren’t gay would you shag me?’ She looked him up and down before saying dubiously, ‘I might.’”

Brilliant though the play is on the value of serious thought and engagement in culture, rather than hotshottery and shallow provocations, it’s difficult to know if it would have become so beloved were it staged today. Hector, the genial general studies teacher (played by the late Richard Griffiths), is notoriously gropey. “It had a slight danger line in it because he was abusive – there’s no other word for it, really. And it was treated with jollity, and kind of seriousness as well, but it wasn’t over-seriously dealt

with.” But she concludes: “I think it tackled the question and it tackled it well.”



With Peter Brook, I was working with the best director in the world



The death of director Peter Brook earlier this year has given her cause to reflect on another one of her defining theatre roles. She played Helena in Brook’s radical, carnivalesque *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, now considered one of the greatest modern Shakespeare productions. Her voice warms at the memory. “It was the best moment of my young life, really.” She’d been doing “bits and bobs” at the RSC, working her way up to a bigger part, “and then the *Dream* came up. And it *was* like a dream. Because I was working with the best director in the world. I was 25 or 26. And it was an *amazing* thing to do.” It went all over the world, including her first stint on Broadway. Working with Brook has been “hard to match”.

“There was no ego in the man at all. It’s *just* about the work. And he was incredibly affectionate with us. And respectful. I think he really did appreciate actors and what they do, and a lot of people don’t. Hence we’re called names, like luvvies, and things like that. That would never, never, never pass his lips, *once*.”

Although she’s now working less, she has a busy life as a grandmother – she has two children and four grandchildren. She’s not on any social media, so ignore a Twitter account that declares “What is really fun is *Love Island!*” under her name. (“They ought to get off, is all I can say.”) She describes herself as

a life-long socialist. “I see no reason to change my views on that. I think we’ve been proved right, quite honestly, with what’s happening with so many nationalist governments all over the world. Low practices in high places.” The political situation in the UK is, she says bluntly, “a disaster” and the knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine can’t be solely blamed. “Care for the economy and distribution of wealth has not been forthcoming, long before the war. The war has sort of accelerated everything and made it much worse.”



De la Tour with Ben Miller in ‘Professor T’ (ITV)

As to whether there’s anything that can give us hope: “I don’t think these words like ‘hope’ come into it. It’s about looking at what’s going on, and what one can do about it. In the end, it is down to the people. For the economy, for starters, there could be another poll tax situation where people do come out in the street and say, ‘Well, actually, enough really is enough. We can’t pay our bills. What are you going to do about it?’ In the end, it is all of us, what we think individually, and how that becomes a collective.”

It’s obvious politics and theatre are two of the chief preoccupations of De la Tour’s life; she speaks of them with the same clarity and conviction. But, with firmness and some regret, she says she won’t be returning to the stage. “I can’t now. I think at a certain age you just go, well, I think I can’t do that anymore.”

In television, “all those things people might find a bit over the top” – like being driven everywhere – “are actually really important because it means older actors can continue working until they drop dead, basically”. She isn’t sure people understand what hard work theatre is: preparation begins from the moment you wake up, use of your voice is limited during the day, “and if you’re bringing up children at the same time, which I was, it’s extremely taxing. But,” she says, with feeling, “I wouldn’t have missed it for the world.”

‘Professor T’ returns to ITV tomorrow at 9pm

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AMORAL HISPANIC

HBO's absurdist comedy 'Los Espookys' might just be the best TV show you're not watching, writes **Annabel Nugent**



Fred Armisen, a co-creator of the show (second from right), plays the car-parking virtuoso uncle to one of the horror enthusiasts (Sky/HBO)

Describing the premise of *Los Espookys*, HBO's wackiest sitcom and its first primarily Spanish-language original series, is easy enough. A ragtag group of friends start a business where they stage fake supernatural events for people who pay them. In the

first episode, released three years ago, the team are hired by an older priest losing favour with his congregation to a younger cleric with great hair and glossy lips. He asks Los Espookys to rig up an exorcism to boost his reputation.

That's the premise of the show. Its sensibility, though, is harder to pin down. The series, which returns for a much-delayed second season this week on Sky Atlantic and Now, is a comedy that exists in an elusive space. Not only because the Latin-American country in which it's set is unnamed, but because there, the surreal and the mundane sit side-by-side. Although the means that the group use to put on their spooky spectacles are endearingly low budget – a rented costume, some SFX makeup, a smoke machine working overtime – their everyday is infused with real-life strangeness. For example, one of them regularly communicates with a water demon who is obsessed with the 2010 Colin Firth film *The King's Speech*.

In the second season, the same character asks the moon (personified by Oscar-nominee Yalitza Aparicio wearing a silver sequined jumpsuit) to shine brighter for a minute so he can find his lost earring. When one of their clients gets trapped in an alternate reality after stepping through a mirror, it's not a question of why there's an alternate reality but why they bought the wrong type of magic mirror. Moments like this are taken at face value by the audience. Maybe they're real. Maybe they aren't. Who cares? You're having fun.

And that's what *Los Espookys* is all about: having fun. Which makes sense given it has *Saturday Night Live* in its DNA. Created by *SNL* stars Fred Armisen and Julio Torres, as well as comedian Ana Fabrega (all of whom write and co-star), the show is an antidote to self-seriousness. It's illogical, whimsical, earnest. Given its *SNL*-approved cast, respectable platform on HBO, 100 per cent *Rotten Tomatoes* rating, and celebrity cameos (Isabella Rossellini features in season two), it's a wonder that *Los Espookys* is still flying below the radar. The fact it's in Spanish will have something to do with that – but it's a shame because *Los Espookys* is one of the best, most memorable comforts TV has had to offer in the past decade.



The Los Espookys team are tasked with creating alien lab subjects for a government presentation (Sky/HBO)

Unlikeable protagonists may be in vogue, but the characters at the heart of *Los Espookys* are completely charming. It's a motley crew comprising the cool and collected Ursula (Cassandra Ciangherotti), her kooky sister Tati (Fabrega), and the group's founder Renaldo (Bernado Velasco), whose leather jackets and chain jewellery belie a soft interior. Even Andres, the moody and melodramatic heir to a chocolate fortune played by Torres, is a snob you can't help but root for. Speaking about *Los Espookys*, Armisen said he wanted to create a show with a fundamentally optimistic outlook. "I just don't like conflict on TV," he told *The New York Times*.

In place of conflict then, is silliness. The opening scene of season two sees Tati impersonating Shakira. The group have been hired by a besmirched artist whose sculpture of the Colombian singer has attracted criticism for looking nothing like her. Tati's Shakira – who, besides the low-waist trousers and glorious mane, also looks nothing like her – tells an audience of art critics: "Wow, I can't believe how accurately you captured my likeness. As you can see, one of my eyes is actually bigger than the other... So please don't be mad at this woman for making this statue given it's the only one that actually looks like me. Well, I have to go now. I'm late for the World Cup. Waka Waka!"

Not exactly a supernatural encounter, but there are no rules in *Los Espookys*.

Another thing the show has going for it is originality. Right now, everything looks and feels and sounds the same. Take the logline from any future release and I'll predict a few keywords: thriller, dark, twisty, buried secret. Maybe there's a detective. It's TV soup: a minestrone of easily digestible ingredients that goes down easy and leaves zero impression. Scroll through the Emmy winners from earlier this week (*Succession*, *Severance*, *Squid Game*, *White Lotus*, *Yellowjackets*, *Hacks*, *Abbott Elementary*, *Barry*, *Ozark*) and you'll see how much audiences appreciate an honest-to-goodness fresh idea. And *Los Espookys* should be on that list. It's original – and not in the capital “O” way that's lost all meaning thanks to the ubiquitous Netflix Original (... adaptations of bestselling novels). Jemaine Clement's vampire comedy *What We Do In The Shadows* is a worthy point of comparison but even so, while the two shows share an offbeat humour, their rhythms are worlds apart.

Los Espookys is also visually exciting. Every shot is worthy of a screenshot in the same way that every shot in a Wes Anderson film is. The cinematography does not aim for naturalism and the colour palette is bold and deliberate. From Andrés's cerulean hair to the bubblegum pink headquarters of the airhead American ambassador Melania (Greta Titelman) to whom our protagonists turn in search of US visas (leaving in a storm one night, a couple of green cards fly out of her purse: “They've touched the ground, now they've gone bad!”), *Los Espookys* is easy on the eye.

Not insignificant, too, is the show's runtime. A lot has been said about brevity lately, with streamers regularly pumping out hour-long episodes for a nine-episode series that could have – and in many cases, should have – been a 90-minute movie. By contrast, every *Los Espookys* instalment clocks in at 25 minutes. Each morsel is short, sweet, and leaves you wanting more. These days, that's a novel feeling. In a TV landscape increasingly defined by middle-ground mulch, *Los Espookys* dares to be different – and is all the better for it.

*Series two of 'Los Espookys' is available to watch on Sky Atlantic
and Now from tomorrow*

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Inflation falls slightly but is still close to 40-year high



The fall in motor fuel prices helped lower rates although inflation will not drop off significantly for some time, expert says (AP)

RORY SULLIVAN

The rate of Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation fell to 9.9 per cent in August, down from 10 per cent in July, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has said. The slight drop comes a month after Britain's rate of inflation rose to a new 40-year high, putting more pressure on families struggling with the cost of living crisis.

In July, CPI inflation hit its highest level since 1982, according to the ONS. Although experts predicted that the figure would remain unchanged in August, downward pressure was put on the inflation rate by the falling price of fuel.

“The easing in the annual inflation rate in August 2022 reflected principally a fall in the price of motor fuels in the transport part of the index,” the ONS said. “Smaller, partially offsetting, upward effects came from price rises for food and non-alcoholic beverages, miscellaneous goods and services, and clothing and footwear,” it added.

Despite falling back below 10 per cent, George Lagarias, chief economist at accountancy Mazars, said inflation would not drop off significantly for some time.

“Higher energy prices for all the previous months have fully fed into most supply chains and it will take months of lower oil for end-consumer prices to meaningfully come down again.

Inflation may well remain a central theme until at least the end of the year,” he said. “However, input costs have begun to drop and we should see this feeding into general prices eventually.”

By one estimate, CPI levels could have risen above 20 per cent because of rising energy prices. However, support measures introduced by the government earlier this month means this is now unlikely.

Under plans announced last week to deal with soaring prices, the government will cap energy bills at £2,500 a year for the average household. The policy means families will not have to pay the £7,700 a year that had been forecast.

However, concerns have been voiced about the potential impact the scheme could have on public finances, as the new “energy price guarantee” will see the government pay energy suppliers billions of pounds to cover the gap with wholesale prices.

Carl Emmerson, deputy director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, said the policy could cost more than £100bn in the first year alone. “The cost will be very, very uncertain,” he said.

Liz Truss has ruled out a windfall tax on energy giants' excess profits, which are estimated by the Treasury to be £170bn.

Labour leader Keir Starmer, who backs a windfall tax, questioned the government's approach, asking how it would finance its expensive scheme. "Under our plan: not a penny more on bills; under this plan: a price rise," Mr Starmer said. "This support does not come cheap. The real question is, who is going to pay?"

Speaking yesterday, Sharon Graham, general secretary of the Unite union, said not enough was being done to protect the most vulnerable in society.

"Rocketing inflation may have been eased last month but that won't last," she said. "Current levels continue to threaten the living standards of millions of workers. This is now a crisis of income. Only the rich and powerful are protected," she added.

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House prices see biggest annual rise in two decades



The average property price was £292,000 in July this year (PA)

VICKY SHAW

The average UK house price leapt by 15.5 per cent annually in July, marking the biggest increase in 19 years, according to official figures.

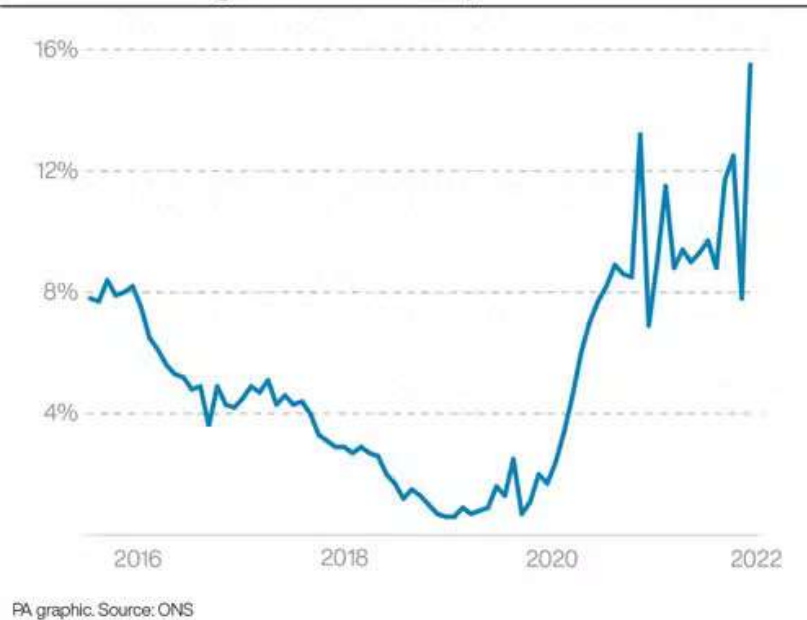
The percentage increase was around double the rate recorded in June, when the typical property value increased by 7.8 per cent annually. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said the

inflation rate was the highest recorded since May 2003. The jump in annual inflation was mainly because of “a base effect” from the falls in prices seen this time last year, as a result of changes in the stamp duty holiday, the report said.

Average UK house prices increased by £6,000 between June and July this year – compared with a fall of £13,000 between the same months last year. The average UK house price was £292,000 in July 2022, which is £39,000 higher than this time last year. Average house prices increased over the year in England to £312,000 (a 16.4 per cent annual increase), in Wales to £220,000 (17.6 per cent), in Scotland to £193,000 (9.9 per cent) and in Northern Ireland to £169,000 (9.6 per cent).

A temporary “nil rate” tax threshold under the stamp duty holiday in England and Northern Ireland was reduced from July last year, before the holiday was completely phased out from October 2021. A similar property tax holiday in Wales ended on 30 June 2021 and the equivalent holiday in Scotland ended on 31 March 2021.

Annual change in UK house prices



Sarah Coles, senior personal finance analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown, said the latest house price jump “is the result of changes to the stamp duty holiday last summer. It doesn’t affect the outlook for the market, which is facing real challenges”. She

continued: “Distortions from the end of the most generous period of the stamp duty holiday last June are playing an enormous role in price rises. There was a burst of demand last June, and people rushed to get sales over the line before the deadline – pushing prices up. As a result, we had a lull in July.”

The report was released as separate figures from the ONS showed that Consumer Prices Index inflation reached 9.9 per cent in the year to August, easing from 10.1 per cent the previous month, reflecting a fall in the price of motor fuels. ONS figures also showed that private rental prices paid by tenants in the UK rose by 3.4 per cent in the 12 months to August 2022, up from 3.3 per cent in the 12 months to July 2022. Private rental prices increased by 3.4 per cent in England, 2.5 per cent in Wales and 3.6 per cent in Scotland in the 12 months to August.

Gareth Atkins, managing director of lettings at Foxtons, said: “This August had the highest level of rental demand we’ve ever seen, as London remains one of the most attractive cities to work and live in. This unprecedented demand, paired with low supply, has pushed prices and budgets up across the capital. We can see multiple factors driving the lack of supply in 2022 – about three-quarters of Foxtons tenancies are renewing and there is a strong sales market in London.”

Karen Noye, mortgage expert at Quilter, said: “The housing market has so far remained resilient despite the ongoing cost of living crisis. While the latest UK inflation data released this morning showed a slight fall to 9.9 per cent last month, a higher peak is still expected to materialise over the coming months and as such the Bank of England is expected to continue hiking interest rates and the current resilience may well falter as a result.”

PA

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A rethink on bank holiday strategy is badly needed



Center Parcs angered customers when it said they would have to leave on Monday

JAMES MOORE

CHIEF BUSINESS COMMENTATOR

Since when did the Queen's funeral become the occasion for a fresh national lockdown? While there has been no (official) instruction from the government, parts of the business

community have nonetheless decided to impose one on their customers.

By far the worst example of this came courtesy of Center Parcs, the holiday village operator, which announced a plan to boot its customers out of its parks (or should that be parcs?) on Monday “as a mark of respect and to allow as many of our colleagues as possible to be part of this historic moment”.

I’m always slightly suspicious when companies start intimating that a deep love for their staff is behind a decision affecting their customers, which is what this amounted to. Some customers – in the middle of longer breaks – were faced with the choice of finding a hotel, preferably one not closed “as a mark of respect”, for a night or spending hours on the road going home before driving back. That is, if they still wanted to have anything to do with the place.

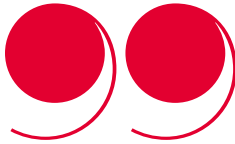
After a deluge of criticism, complaints, and considerable online mockery, the policy was reversed. Partially. People in the middle of their breaks will be able to stay on site, although the facilities will be closed. But those who booked holidays starting Monday will now have to wait until Tuesday to start their broken breaks. I suppose that makes it a case of them’s the breaks.

The company appears not to have considered that people may have booked train tickets, hired cars, or made other arrangements that can’t be easily changed at very short notice and may see them incurring financial penalties. Most of the supermarkets will also be closing or, at best, drastically reducing their hours, again as “as a mark of respect”. So will many other consumer-facing businesses.

All this talk of respect ignores how profoundly disrespectful these decisions are towards some customers, not all of whom will be monarchists. Shouldn’t it be their choice as to whether or not they wish to participate in the events or whether they prefer to get the jump on their weekly shop, see a movie or buy a burger? There may be still more serious complications. People with medical conditions often rely on supermarket pharmacies, something else which appears not to have been considered.



As one Twitter user put it, the firm managed to ‘keep calm and carry on’ while providing a welcome sign that common sense hasn’t entirely become extinct on these shores



The claim that all this is to allow staff to participate in the event also bears closer scrutiny. Shouldn’t their choices should be respected? I have no doubt that at least some of them would choose to work if overtime rates were offered.

Official figures show that the inflation rate fell slightly in August, to 9.9 per cent. But the impact rising prices are having on people on lower wages – which applies to most of those in retail, hospitality and what have you – is still brutal. A day’s work at time and a half, or even double as some employers offer, could be very welcome to those whose budgets are currently under severe strain.

It is possible to do this better. Center Parcs’ sometimes savage social media critics weren’t slow to pick up on the stance taken by Butlin’s, which emailed its customers to let them know their breaks were going ahead as planned. The holiday operator said it was “reviewing our schedule including the airing of the funeral and we’ll email you with more information next week”.

It appears to be intent on finding a way to serve the interests of customers while ensuring they and Butlin’s staff can participate in the occasion if that is their choice. As one Twitter user put it, the firm managed to “keep calm and carry on” while providing a

welcome sign that common sense hasn't entirely become extinct on these shores.

Couldn't those supermarkets, which boasted about how they "kept Britain fed" during the Covid-19 pandemic, follow that sensible lead and maybe close during the funeral hours before reopening to avoid leaving their customers fed up?

Fuller's said its 400 pubs would remain open to "provide a place for people to come together and pay their respects". Or to provide a place where people can get a beer with their friends if that's what they prefer to do. Either is fine. Better still is the fact that the company is prepared to give its customers a choice.

Isn't freedom to choose the point of living in a constitutional monarchy in the first place? Some very well-paid CEOs appear to have forgotten that. Perhaps they need a civics lesson.

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Business news in brief



Heinz is among 800 firms that will have to reapply for a royal warrant (PA)

Brands to reapply for royal warrants after Queen's death

Coca-Cola, Cadbury and Heinz are among around 800 firms that will have to reapply for a royal warrant after the prestigious label became void following the death of the Queen. Retailers Fortnum & Mason and Waitrose – and brands including Twinings tea and Bollinger champagne – are also among those that advertise the late monarch's coveted coat of arms on their stores and packaging. The Royal Warrant Holders Association says warrants became void when the Queen died but firms can

continue “for up to two years, provided there is no significant change within the company concerned”. *PA*

Dunelm sees record profit despite ‘challenging’ economy

Home furnishings retailer Dunelm has seen annual profits leap nearly a third higher to a new record, but flagged an “extremely challenging” wider economic backdrop. The group reported that pre-tax profits jumped 32.4 per cent to £209m on a pro forma 52-week basis, up from £157.8m the previous year. Dunelm said sales had remained “robust” in the first 10 weeks since its 2 July year-end but its costs have been soaring, with inflationary pressures – mainly on staff wages – adding another £17m to its annual operating expenses. *PA*

Naked Wines’ shares drop as director quits after three weeks

Shares in Naked Wines tumbled after the online retailer announced a director is leaving after only three weeks in the job. The firm shareholders said on Tuesday: “The company is reviewing potential operational and financial plans for the next 18 months and will update on these plans alongside our trading update. Alongside this process we are in active discussions to address our credit facility to reflect any revised plan.” Wayne Brown, an analyst at Liberum, noted that “something has gone somewhat awry” at the firm. *PA*

Redrow warns of sluggish housing market despite profit growth

Housebuilder Redrow says annual profits have returned to pre-pandemic record levels but warns the housing market is cooling because of the cost of living crisis. The warning comes amid mounting signs of dampening demand in the UK property market, with lenders Halifax and Nationwide both reporting slower annual price growth in August. Matthew Pratt, group chief executive, said: “Over the last two years the market has been incredibly strong with elevated demand, partly resulting

from people's changed priorities around working from home.

We are now seeing a return to a more normal market.” *PA*

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Haaland wonder goal gives City win over former club

Manchester City

Stones (80), Haaland (84)

2

Borussia Dortmund

Bellingham (56)

1



The Norway international's acrobatics gave City victory after a John Stones rocket had cancelled out Jude Bellingham's opener (Manchester City FC/Getty)

MARK CRITCHLEY

AT THE ETIHAD STADIUM

Six minutes from the time, it appeared as though this first reunion between Borussia Dortmund and Erling Haaland might answer the question the whole of European football is currently asking. Maybe he can be stopped. Maybe he is human after all. Maybe all it takes to prevent him from scoring is a deep, intimate knowledge of his strengths and weaknesses developed over the course of two years seeing him train and play every day. Turns out, that's not enough.

Eventually, this extraordinary run of scoring will stop. At some point, his goal record will come ever so slightly back down to earth. For now though, it is enough to say that Haaland's 13th goal in eight games completed yet another Manchester City comeback to strengthen their position in Group G and bring passage to the Champions League knockout stages one step closer.

The finish itself was remarkable – his left foot stretched out like a kung-fu kick to connect with Joao Cancelo's cross from deep – and knock the ball past Dortmund goalkeeper Alexander Meyer from an acute angle. Until that point, the chances of him punishing his former club had appeared unlikely. He had barely had a clear sight of goal all night. Yet if he proved anything during those formative seasons in the Bundesliga, it is that he only needs one.

Dortmund suffered at the hands of a monster of their own creation. It was not entirely deserved. Jude Bellingham's header had looked likely to earn Edin Terzic's side a famous win that their organised defending warranted but with just 10 minutes remaining, their resolve was broken by a thunderbolt from – of all people – John Stones. City rallied. Haaland scored. This night would follow the script, after all.

Many sides come to the Etihad and set out to reduce the first half to a total non-event but few are successful. Dortmund were. On the eve of this game, Edin Terzic avoided offering specific answers to questions on how to combat Haaland and instead focused on how his players would stop City as a team. They

succeeded by following the game plan he had already laid out: compact, disciplined defending that narrowed the spaces Guardiola's side usually exploit and careful use of possession.

Terzic predicted that Dortmund would have as little as 20 per cent of the ball. They ended the half with almost double that by carefully retaining and recycling inside their own half, successfully avoiding and even beating City's press. This meant there was precious little going the other way but still, at the break, the only shot on target was Dortmund's: a clipped effort from Salih Ozcan, from a move started by Bellingham, that was easily held by Ederson.



Haaland came back to haunt his old club (Manchester City FC/Getty)

His counterpart in the Dortmund goal went untested, despite the air of expectation every time the ball was in a certain player's vicinity. Haaland went close to connecting with a Riyad Mahrez cross after a quarter-of-an-hour but was beaten to the header by Niklas Sule, the only player on the pitch to be as tall and as broad as the Norwegian. Other than that, Cancelo blazed over from range and Jack Grealish had two shots blocked in quick succession.

Guardiola insisted that this was a rested team rather than a weakened one, having made four changes from last week's win over Sevilla, but the fact it contained several players short of either form or confidence was beginning to tell. Marco Reus should have put Dortmund ahead at the start of the second half

when he tore through the right-hand side of City's defence far too easily and shaped to shoot into the far corner, instead firing across the face of goal and wide.

Yet just as Guardiola prepared a triple substitution to snap City out of their slumber, Dortmund struck. Gio Reyna's corner from the right was flicked on by Ozcan and made it all the way to the right-hand edge of the penalty area, where Reus was waiting to send it back from whence it came. Bellingham was one step ahead of his former teammates Haaland and Manuel Akanji, squeezing between the pair of them to connect with a header that Ederson failed to anticipate.



England player Bellingham had given Dortmund a surprise lead (Reuters)

As Bellingham celebrated in front of the travelling support, that triple substitution was hastened. Julian Alvarez, Bernardo Silva and Phil Foden were thrown on all at once which – even in this era of five substitutions – felt like a sign of Guardiola's growing frustration. Having spent the majority of the first half sitting in the dugout, he was now almost permanently perched on the edge of his technical area, often straying beyond its boundaries to explain how a particular passing sequence should have been played.

All to no avail. None of City's usual patterns and combinations were having an effect. At which point, you sometimes just have to hit it. That was exactly what Stones did, at least, collecting a square pass from an otherwise quiet Kevin De Bruyne and firing

at will. Alexander Meyer did not so much attempt to save it as have some sort of muscle spasm, wildly flailing his arms around as it passed him on its way in.

That air of expectation from earlier in the night was suddenly restored. Four minutes later, as Haaland stuck a long leg out to meet Cancelo's far post cross, it was realised.

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Chelsea start Potter era with disappointing draw

Chelsea

Sterling (48)

1

Red Bull Salzburg

Okafor (75)

1



The England forward curled in the first goal of the new boss' reign (Getty)

JAMIE BRAIDWOOD

AT STAMFORD BRIDGE

Well, no one said this would be easy. You only get one chance at a first impression and although Graham Potter will be pleased with large parts of his team's performance against FC Salzburg, he and Chelsea come away without the result they were looking for, as well as some familiar frustrations. Raheem Sterling's fine finish to give Chelsea the lead followed an encouraging opening spell from Potter's side but as casualness crept in, Thiago Silva's lapse led to Noah Okafor's equaliser and a potentially sticky situation in Group E.

Much of that, of course, is not of Potter's own making and instead there can be a lot to take from his first experience of the Champions League. After a disastrous display and result in Zagreb, the sacking of Thomas Tuchel and a whirlwind week, Chelsea were far sharper and Potter's early work on the training ground was evident, but this remains a team who are low on confidence and restoring it will be the former Brighton manager's more pertinent task in the coming weeks.

With just one point from their opening two group games, a tricky double header against AC Milan looms next month that will go a long way to determining whether Chelsea are still involved in the competition come the new year. Before then, Potter will have time to get to work and on the initial evidence of his first match in charge, the Englishman will hope to have made further strides by then - even if the scale of the job at hand was made clear here.

Potter arrived at Stamford Bridge with a reputation for improving players and can take heart by already seeing Sterling and Mason Mount produce their best performances of the season. They combined to score the first goal of the Potter era but if Chelsea were bright and lively until that point, there was a sharp reminder of why a Champions League winning manager in Tuchel lost his job just weeks into the new season.

The initial signs were promising, though. Tactical flexibility was one of the reasons Potter caught the eye at Brighton and he offered an immediate example of it with his first selection as Chelsea manager. There would be no staying safe: Tuchel's back

three was not quite dropped but rather adjusted to be more reflective of his predominant system at Brighton. Reece James pushed high right, Marc Cucurella tucked in and Sterling pulled wide left when Chelsea were in possession. It largely played out as a 3-1-4-2, but Chelsea's shape also shifted and shimmered.

The results were exciting. After the turgid display in Zagreb, this was for most parts pretty fast and fluid. Sterling revelled in the space, Mount seemed released and Kai Havertz was more comfortable. Chelsea have not looked a quick team in recent weeks but they moved the ball with speed and zip in the opening stages. Salzburg, a team so reliant on pressure and intensity, became overwhelmed by it and were made to hang on.

Potter clapped in approval but despite his immediate and evident work on Chelsea's shape, building confidence for a team struggling to score will take more time. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was involved but limited to half-chances, Havertz and Sterling had efforts blocked before Mount went close with a sliced volley from the edge of the box. As half time arrived, Salzburg had forced the only save as Benjamin Sesko's sharp shot on the turn drew a smart reaction from Kepa.



The London club are bottom of Group E after two rounds of fixtures (Getty)

The break came at a good time for Chelsea, just as Stamford Bridge was growing a touch impatient, and when they emerged to go again in the second half it was followed by an immediate breakthrough. Sterling's fine goal on 48 minutes may have been

Chelsea's first shot on target but it has been coming, from its execution right down to its creation.

James had rolled his defender on the touchline earlier in the match and did so again before releasing Mount down the right. His ball driven across the box was missed by the defender Bernardo, left by Aubameyang and when it reached Sterling, the forward took a touch before curling an excellent finish into the far corner.

Chelsea seemed to settle after Sterling's goal and you could feel the easing of tension and collective relaxing of shoulders in the spell that followed. Potter made his first changes, with Armando Broja and Ruben Loftus-Cheek coming on, but Salzburg sensed a slim lead and pounced upon Chelsea's lapse. Almost to sum it up, Silva was too casual in sliding in to challenge Junior Aduma and when the forward wriggled clear and squared to Okafor, the striker slipped a finish underneath Kepa to equalise.

Chelsea had their chances late on. Broja and James fired over the crossbar while Hakim Ziyech shot straight at the goalkeeper Philipp Kohn. Potter will have wanted Chelsea to play like Brighton had been over the opening weeks of the season but replicating their underperformance in xG will not have been one of his pre-match messages.

At Ostersunds, Potter famously led a side he had taken charge of in the fourth division of Swedish football to a two-legged victory over Galatasaray in his first European match as a manager . But while his second opponent in the qualifying rounds of the Europa League were the Luxembourg champions Fola Esch, Potter will now lead out his team against the Italian champions AC Milan next month. This is the step up he now faces. Soon, results will have to follow too.

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Dominant Celtic settle for point after missed chances

Shakhtar Donetsk

Mudryk (29)

1

Celtic

Bondarenko (10 og)

1



Kyogo Furuhashi and his Celtic teammates endured a frustrating night in Poland (PA)

Celtic could not build on a dominant start to their Champions League contest against Shakhtar Donetsk as they were held to a frustrating 1-1 draw in Poland.

Reo Hatate's run beyond the home defence led to Celtic taking an early lead but Mykhaylo Mudryk equalised against the run of play in the 29th minute.

Ange Postecoglou's men survived some more pressure before reasserting their superiority after the break. However, substitute Giorgos Giakoumakis missed the best in a series of opportunities for Celtic to claim their first European win of the campaign.

Having also squandered chances during their opening defeat by Real Madrid, Celtic now face another trip to RB Leipzig.

The point continued Shakhtar's positive start to Group F following their shock win over Leipzig last week. The Ukrainian side, who have been displaced from their home stadium since 2014, attracted a near-capacity crowd of close to 30,000 in Legia Warsaw's stadium but the vast majority of noise came from the away fans.

There was no minute's silence for the Queen following discussions between both clubs and Uefa but both sets of players wore black armbands.

Off the pitch, some of the visiting fans made their anti-monarchy views known. A banner in the Celtic end stated: "Fuck the Crown" while another one said: "Sorry for your loss Michael Fagan", a reference to the intruder who broke into the Queen's Buckingham Palace bedroom in 1982.



Giorgos Giakoumakis had a great chance to win the game but shot narrowly wide (PA)

Early in the match, there was a chant of “If you hate the royal family, clap your hands” but the Celtic fans quickly had some positive play to get behind.

Matt O’Riley played in Kyogo Furuhashi in the opening minute but Shakhtar goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin got a foot to the striker’s shot to divert it wide.

Greg Taylor’s driven cross was deflected just too far in front of the Japan forward and Matt O’Riley had an effort saved before Celtic took the lead in the 10th minute.

Josip Juranovic’s diagonal ball found Sead Haksabanovic, who was making his first start for the club. The winger fed Hatate’s forward run and the midfielder’s shot took a deflection off Artem Bondarenko and went in. Furuhashi could have tapped it home but, perhaps conscious of a possible offside decision, chose to leave it, only for it to be credited as an own goal.

Celtic continued to cause Shakhtar numerous problems with their passing and movement but the Ukrainian side levelled out of the blue. A pass inside former Legia right-back Juranovic gave left-winger Mykhaylo Mudryk a clear run at goal and he fired high into the net.

The goal gave Donetsk a major lift and former Celtic winger Marian Shved soon had the ball in the net. Shved, who only

made three appearances for the Hoops, was denied his dream goal by an offside flag against provider Mudryk.



Celtic had to settle for a point (PA)

Joe Hart then parried Shved's curling effort before Celtic got the chance to regroup at half-time. They again started well and Jota's curling effort was spilt seconds after the restart but Shakhtar cleared the danger.

The Portuguese winger twice came close to scoring memorable goals but had shots blocked at the end of impressive mazy runs.

O'Riley threatened on a number of occasions and his replacement, David Turnbull, shot not far over from 25 yards.

Daizen Maeda saw an acrobatic overhead effort diverted wide and another substitute, Giakoumakis, missed Celtic's best chance for a winner with five minutes left. Taylor's pass picked out the normally accurate Greek striker unmarked but he fired his left-footed shot inches wide from 14 yards.

Maeda also had a good late chance but the Japanese attacker fired wide as he slid to meet Juranovic's driven cross.

Giakoumakis then beat the goalkeeper to a cross but his header did not have enough power to get away from a retreating Shakhtar defender, who stopped it from going over the line.

PA

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Rangers suffer another heavy European defeat

Rangers

Sands (sent off 55)

0

Napoli

Politano (68 pen), Raspadori (85), Ndombele (90+1)

3



French midfielder Ndombele (centre) added gloss for the Italians (Getty)

RONNIE ESPLIN

AT IBROX

Ten-man Rangers were left searching for their first Champions League point after a 3-0 defeat by Napoli at Ibrox, where penalties were the turning point of the game.

Returning goalkeeper Allan McGregor sensationally saved a retaken Piotr Zielinski spot-kick on the hour after Gers defender James Sands was sent off conceding it, before he was beaten from 12 yards in the 67th minute by Matteo Politano. Giacomo Raspadori added a second with five minutes remaining and fellow substitute Tanguy Ndombele grabbed a third in added time to compound Gers' misery

The Light Blues lost 4-0 to Ajax last week after going down by the same score against Celtic at Parkhead in their previous match. However, they showed the desired spirit and determination against the classy Serie A leaders before coming up short when they went down to 10 men. Boss Giovanni van Bronckhorst had vowed to stick to his footballing philosophy after two heavy defeats, but he rang the changes from Amsterdam - one enforced as 40-year-old McGregor returned in goal for the injured Jon McLaughlin.

Colombia striker Alfredo Morelos, recently left out of the squad through fitness issues and attitude, made his first start since March, while Ryan Jack, Steven Davis and Scott Arfield came into midfield with John Lundstram dropping back to a five-man defence.

Against UEFA instructions, fans had been invited to sing the national anthem after the minute's silence to commemorate the death of Queen Elizabeth and they belted it out. Then came a pulsating first half. Morelos came close in the first minute with a glancing header from a James Tavernier cross. Napoli responded quickly and Zielinski hammered a left-footed shot off the outside of a post from the edge of the box.

In the 12th minute a powerful Arfield drive from 25 yards was beaten away by Napoli goalkeeper Alex Meret for a corner which came to nothing, before McGregor denied Giovanni Simeone with his leg at the other end. It was breathless stuff.



The Italian side were clinical while Rangers now face a big task to qualify (Getty)

With no away fans present due to policing issues following the death of the Queen, the home supporters had the stadium to themselves and were almost off their seats when Morelos, booked earlier by Spanish referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz for a late challenge on Meret, fired in low from the edge of the box but the keeper gathered confidently.

Napoli, busy and robust, posed a constant threat and Georgia international Khvicha Kvaratskhelia flashed a drive inches wide from the edge of the box just before the interval. McGregor punched away an angled drive from Kvaratskhelia shortly after the restart and then Politano shot wide from 20 yards.

Then came the madness. As Simeone raced clean through on goal he was tackled by back-tracking Sands, who had been booked just three minutes earlier for a foul on Politano, with Lundstram also in attendance.

Referee Mateu Laho produced a second yellow and then red to send the USA international packing. McGregor brilliantly saved Zielinski's penalty but Politano slammed the rebound through the keeper's legs.

However, after a lengthy VAR check the penalty had to be retaken for encroachment and McGregor again dived to his right to parry Zielinski's spot-kick and Ibrox erupted. However, another Napoli penalty arrived when left-back Borna Barisic was

adjudged to have handled a drive from Kvaratskhelia and this time Politano found the bottom corner.

It was then an uphill task for Rangers. McGregor saved a drive from Zielinski as Napoli took full control but with five minutes remaining Raspador combined with fellow substitute Mathias Olivera and knocked in a second before Ndombele struck from 14 yards in added time for a third.

PA

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Klopp restores principles as Liverpool grind down Ajax



Jurgen Klopp at the end of the Champions League match (Liverpool FC/Getty)

RICHARD JOLLY

SENIOR FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

Liverpool had needed to reinvent themselves, Jurgen Klopp said, and they did. As winners, albeit just about. Klopp had greater things on his mind in the bowels of the Stadio Diego

Armando Maradona than the precise choice of words in his second language, but if the definition of reinvention brought debate then the Liverpool manager's version was less revolutionary than retro.

It was more old Liverpool than new Liverpool, more the Liverpool of the last few years than a glimpse of a very different era. All of which felt logical, given the difficulty of reinventing a side in six days with the same squad. But if Ajax were beaten by a late Joel Matip header – “nobody was surprised it was a set-piece,” said Klopp after a typical Liverpool goal – they also lost to a team with a more familiar feel. If Liverpool did not play football, as Klopp sees it, last week, they did once again.

“If you put the two games together, Napoli and tonight, you don't recognise properly that it's the same sport. It was all different. The start was different. The middle was different. The end was different.” That sweeping statement came within the context: “Nobody gets carried away.” Reinventing Liverpool is really rebuilding Liverpool. This, he said, was: “A first step.” A step backwards, taking them closer to previous seasons' excellence, represented a step forwards. The performance in Naples was, felt Virgil van Dijk, “unacceptable”. The response was acceptable.



Klopp congratulates Konstantinos Tsimikas after the game
(Liverpool FC/Getty)

It was not Liverpool at their best, but it was them with principles restored. Klopp admitted he lost count of the times he used the word “compact” in his post-match interviews in Naples. He was lamenting what they had lost. They regained a sense of shape and structure in midfield. There is something deeply technocratic about distances between teammates, but it is part of the basis of Liverpool’s defensive game. Too often this season, midfielders going in different directions have formed giant lopsided triangles. Here they were close together, a pressing game implemented by players harrying as a pack. That cohesion allowed Liverpool to play on the front foot. In that, they were epitomised by the effervescent Kostas Tsimikas.

Their calmer attitude was summed up by their match winner. Joe Gomez was panicked in Naples but Matip is an unflustered character as well as a line-breaking dribbler from the back. If there are a host of reasons for Liverpool’s problems in their troubled start to the season, one is a simple matter of personnel:

remove too many of the premier people – and after his stellar season last year, Matip felt desperately unlucky not to start the Champions League final – and the squad became stretched.

Respite came in the shape of reinforcements. The carnage in Naples concealed a rare fringe benefit, a fitness exercise for Matip and Diogo Jota in the second half as each gained valuable minutes. If Matip's inclusion at Gomez's expense was a predictable change, Jota's return to the starting 11 felt more instructive. Klopp had a three-way choice, between the past and the future, the ageing talisman Roberto Firmino and the summer signing Darwin Nunez. He instead plumped for Jota.

“He combines the qualities of Bobby and Darwin,” he rationalised before kick-off. If, in itself, it contains a hint of trouble for Nunez, benched for a second successive Champions League game, deemed to be lacking too many of the qualities that rendered Firmino special, Jota showed what he meant.

His drought now spans 16 games but he buzzed around, showing a Firmino-like ability to materialise between the lines. He supplied Mohamed Salah's first goal in eight Champions League games by darting into space to meet Luis Diaz's header, allying speed of foot with speed of mind.



Mohamed Salah scores Liverpool's first goal against Ajax (Getty)

Klopp has found a variety of ways of praising Firmino over the years; at his most effusive, he has said that “people will write

books” about the Brazilian. Yet his most accurate description may be one of the simplest: he once called Firmino a “connector”. While he sat on the bench, Jota connected midfield with attack, Diaz with Salah. He showed a blend of irrepressibility and positional nous.

At their best, Liverpool have been knitted together by connectors. They continue to have defensive difficulties on their right, with Alexander-Arnold’s attacking excellence offset by problems when exposed. Liverpool missed Jordan Henderson, who provided defensive ballast when the right-sided trio consisted of him, Mohamed Salah and Alexander-Arnold. Harvey Elliott’s task is to ally his talent with that solidity. Henderson’s career is a triumph of work ethic.

There was something quintessentially Kloppian in that Liverpool, who ran their way to glory, encountered adversity and found an answer in industry. They ground Ajax down, 23 shots eventually producing two goals. “When you have a problem and you want to sort it immediately, put a bigger shift in,” Klopp said. A show of character, he thought, was “the most important thing”. It was a sentiment he could have voiced at any time in the past seven years. It was not reinvention, but it was reinvigoration.

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Sport news in brief



The multi-grand slam winner bowed out at the third round of the US Open (AP)

Williams will ‘not be relaxing’ after playing final match

Serena Williams says she “will not be relaxing” after playing what is likely to be her final competitive tennis match, and can now find time for “things that I’ve been wanting to do for so many years”. The global tennis phenomenon said that her reported “retirement” from the sport was “more of an evolution of Serena” and it was time for her to explore her other passions.

The multi-grand slam winner bowed out of the third round of the US Open tournament earlier this month after losing in three sets to Ajla Tomljanovic. Speaking about her tennis career on

The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, she said: “I think retirement is something that is super-earned and that people work really hard for. I feel like I’m at an age where I definitely have a lot more to give and there’s a lot more that I want to do so I’m not going to be relaxing, there’s so much more for me. I feel like it’s more of an evolution of Serena.” *PA*

Norrie beats Fritz to set up doubles decider

Cameron Norrie scrapped to a gutsy win over Taylor Fritz to send Great Britain’s Davis Cup tie against the United States to a late-night deciding doubles rubber. The British No 1 was faced with a must-win match after Dan Evans was beaten 6-4 4-6 6-4 by Tommy Paul in a high-quality opening rubber at the Emirates Arena.

Norrie made a very unpromising start, quickly losing the first set, and, after seeing an early break disappear, was hanging on for much of the second set. But he managed to force a tie-break, seized his chance in that, and then served out a 2-6 7-6 (7-2) 7-5 victory at the second attempt just after 9.30pm last night to the delight of a packed crowd.

The result means the tie, Britain’s opening contest of a four-team round-robin group, will be decided by the doubles rubber, set to feature Andy Murray and Joe Salisbury against Salisbury’s US Open-winning partner Rajeev Ram and Jack Sock. *PA*

England break world record with 25th straight win in Wales rout

England continued their Women’s Rugby World Cup preparations in landmark fashion as they crushed Wales 73-7 at Ashton Gate. It was the Red Roses’ 25th successive victory – a feat no Test nation, male or female, had previously accomplished.

They are unbeaten since July 2019, and Sarah Hunter’s team will open their World Cup campaign against Fiji in Auckland on 8 October as clear tournament favourites. England produced another dominant display in front of an 11,600 crowd, never

looking back following first-half tries for centres Helena Rowland and Emily Scarratt, flanker Marlie Packer and full-back Ellie Kildunne.

Scarratt kicked three conversions, while there was also a penalty try after Wales had briefly hauled themselves level through a Gwen Crabb touchdown converted by Elinor Snowsill. The second half was a similar tale of dominance, as further scores followed for Rowland – who completed her hat-trick with two more tries – Scarratt, Zoe Aldcroft, substitutes Amy Cokayne and Hannah Botterman, with two additional Scarratt conversions giving her a 20-point haul, while Rowland added two conversions and Amber Reed one. *PA*

Joshua's team 'not allowed to negotiate' Fury fight terms

Eddie Hearn has said Anthony Joshua's team have been “treated like the B-side” and have not been “allowed to negotiate” fight terms for a potential clash with Tyson Fury. An all-British heavyweight super-fight between Joshua and Fury looked to have slipped away for good when “AJ” was outpointed by Oleksandr Usyk for the second fight in a row in August. But Fury this month offered Joshua a shot at his WBC heavyweight title, and talks have advanced quickly in recent weeks, with AJ accepting a 60-40 purse split in his compatriot's favour and 50-50 in a potential rematch.

“Obviously with the Queen's passing, we haven't really spoken too much about it at the weekend,” Eddie Hearn said in a Matchroom video on YouTube, referencing the death of Queen Elizabeth II last week. “On Friday I met with George Warren [of Queensberry Promotions], we had an offer for the fight. We weren't happy with all the terms, we tried to negotiate those terms and we were told, ‘There is no negotiation, take it or leave it’, and we took it.”

England add Hussey and Saker as coaches for T20 World Cup

England have appointed a familiar face and an old adversary to their coaching staff for next month's Twenty20 World Cup, with David Saker and Michael Hussey joining up. The Australian duo have agreed short-term deals, with Saker returning to the fold as bowling consultant having previously worked as fast bowling coach between 2010 and 2015. Saker will begin his role during the seven-match T20 series in Pakistan, with England's first tour of the country in 17 years due to begin on 20 September, while Hussey will link up as a batting specialist for the World Cup.

The white-ball set-up now has a decidedly Australian influence, led by white-ball head coach Matthew Mott, but Richard Dawson and Carl Hopkinson remain at his side as assistants. With the tournament taking place Down Under, England will be hoping to make the most of their new wealth of local knowledge. Saker, 56, was a well-liked and successful part of Andy Flower's England regime, helping forge the bowling attack that took the team to number one in the Test rankings as well as claiming an unforgettable Ashes success in 2010-11. *PA*

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